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A GALLANT OF LORRAINE

FRANÇOIS, SEIGNEUR DE BASSOMPIERRE,
MARQUIS D'HAROUEL, MARÉCHAL
DE FRANCE (1579-1646)

BY

H. NOEL WILLIAMS

AUTHOR OF "FIVE FAIR SISTERS," "A PRINCESS OF INTRIGUE,"
"THE BROOD OF FALSE LORRAINE," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES

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A Gallant of Lorraine

CHAPTER XXV

Offer of Schomberg, Saint-Géran and Marillac to take Montauban within twelve days—Advice of Père Arnoux—Diplomacy of Bassompierre—A humiliating fiasco—A second attempt meets with no better success—Bassompierre counsels the King to raise the siege, and it is decided to follow his advice—General exasperation against Luynes—Louis XIII begins to grow weary of his favourite—Conversation of the King with Bassompierre—The latter warns Luynes that he “does not sufficiently cultivate the good graces of the King”—Reply of the Constable—Louis XIII twits Luynes with the love of the Duc de Chevreuse for his wife—Puisieux, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Père Arnoux, the King’s Jesuit confessor, conspire against the Constable—Disgrace of the latter—Bassompierre, at the head of the bulk of the Royal forces, lays siege to Monheurt—A perilous situation—Bassompierre falls ill of fever—He leaves the army and sets out for La Réole—He is taken seriously ill at Marmande—His three doctors—Approach of the enemy—Refusal of the townsfolk to admit him and his suite into the town—A terrible night—He recovers and proceeds to Bordeaux—Death of the Constable before Monheurt.

DURING the next few days some progress was made by the Guards at Ville-Nouvelle ; but the other two divisions seemed able to do little or nothing ; while the garrison, strengthened by the accession of several hundred first-class fighting men, harassed them incessantly. On October 4, Louis XIII summoned another council of war at Picqueos, to which Bassompierre went. On his arrival he was met by Père Arnoux, the King’s Jesuit confessor, who said to him : “ Well, Monsieur, Montauban is going to be given, so they say, to him who offers the lowest price for it, as they give the public works in France. In how many days do you offer to take it ? ” Bassompierre replied that no one would be so presumptuous as to name a day by which a place like Montauban could be taken, and that the duration of the siege would

depend on many circumstances. "We have bidders much more determined than you are," rejoined the Jesuit. And he told him that the leaders of the Le Moustier division had pledged "their heads and their honour" to take Montauban in twelve days, provided that the Guards would hand over to them the greater part of their cannon; and that it was with the object of deliberating upon this proposal that the council had been summoned. He then advised Bassompierre, with whom he was on very friendly terms, that he and colleagues "would do a thing agreeable to the King and the Constable by not opposing it, unless they were prepared to pledge themselves to place Montauban in the King's hands in an even shorter time."

Bassompierre thanked the Jesuit, and drawing Praslin and Chaulnes aside, told them of the proposal which the leaders of the Le Moustier division—Schomberg, Saint-Géran and Marillac—intended to make at the council, though he did not tell them of the source of his information, which he allowed them to think was the King himself. He then pointed out that these officers, who had been in anything but good odour with the King and the rest of the army since their refusal to attack the bastion of Le Moustier, hoped to rehabilitate their reputation for courage by offering to accomplish a task which they must very well know to be impossible, even with the assistance of the Guards' cannon. They undoubtedly believed, however, that Praslin and Chaulnes would refuse to surrender their artillery, in which event they would gain credit with the King for having made the offer, and, at the same time, throw the responsibility for being unable to carry it out upon the officers of the Guards' division, of whom they were bitterly jealous. And he begged the two marshals "in God's name" not to fall into the trap prepared for them by refusing to give up their cannon. The latter agreed to do as he advised, and they went into the room where the council was assembling.

The Constable opened the proceedings in a lengthy speech, in which he exhorted the marshals and generals present to "lay aside all emulations, jealousies and envies," and co-operate loyally together for the service of the King. Then he turned to the leaders of the Guards' division and "inquired how long precisely they would require to take the town." Bassompierre and the two marshals, after a pretence of consulting together, answered that they had done, and would continue to do, everything that was humanly possible to achieve this result, but that they were not prepared to name any definite time. The Constable then said that the officers from Le Moustier were ready to pledge themselves to take the town in twelve days; and Saint-Géran, turning to the King, exclaimed: "Yes, Sire, we promise it you upon our honour and upon our lives!"

Bassompierre and his colleagues applauded their resolution to render this great service to the King, and assured them that, as devoted servants of his Majesty, if there were any way in which they might contribute to the success of their enterprise, they had only to command them. Upon which the Constable said that the King wished them to send to Le Moustier sixteen of their siege-guns. To this they at once consented, and added that, if men were needed, they would willingly send 1,500 or 2,000, and Bassompierre himself would command them.

The officers from Le Moustier, much embarrassed, for they had counted with confidence on their demand for the Guards' cannon being refused, thanked them, and said that their artillery was all that they required. The others then said to the Constable that, in view of the fact that they were surrendering practically the whole of their siege-guns, they presumed that the King would discharge them from the obligation of taking the town; and they were given to understand that all that would be required of them would be to divert the enemy's attention from Le Moustier by occasional attacks and mines.

Within the next forty-eight hours the Guards' cannon was delivered at Le Moustier; but when Bassompierre went there on the 10th, on the pretext of visiting a friend of his who had been wounded, to see how matters were progressing, he found that the batteries were very badly placed, and that, notwithstanding the weight of gunfire, comparatively little impression had been made on the defences.

On the previous day, Bassompierre, catching sight of La Force on the ramparts of Ville-Nouvelle, had gone forward, under a flag of truce, to speak to him. He found the Huguenot chief eager for some arrangement which would put an end to this fratricidal struggle; and, at his suggestion, he spoke to Chaulnes and urged him to persuade the Constable to meet Rohan, who, La Force had given him to understand, would be willing to approach Montauban for that purpose, and discuss with him terms of peace. This Chaulnes agreed to do, and on October 13 an interview took place between Luynes and Rohan at the Château of Regnies, some four leagues from Picqueos. After a long consultation, terms were agreed upon, subject to the approval of the King and the Council, which, says Bassompierre, were "advantageous and honourable for the King and useful for the State." But when the Council met, Schomberg urged that a decision should be postponed until after he and his colleagues at Le Moustier had made their attempt to take the town, which he was confident would be successful. In that event, he pointed out, they would be able to impose much more severe terms on the Huguenots. And he swore "on his honour and his life" that he would take Montauban within the time specified. The King and the Council, impressed by such unbounded confidence, agreed to do as he advised.

On the 17th, the Constable sent for Bassompierre to come to Le Moustier, where he had gone to dine with Schomberg, and inquired whether a mine which he had instructed him to prepare some days before were finished.

Bassompierre replied in the affirmative, upon which the Constable said : " It must be exploded to-morrow so soon as you receive the order from me, for, if it please God, to-morrow we shall be in Montauban, provided everyone is willing to do his duty." Bassompierre answered that he could rely on the Guards' division doing theirs, when Luynes told him that the explosion of the mine must be followed by a feint against the advanced-works of Ville-Nouvelle, in order to divert the enemy while the Le Moustier division stormed the town. Bassompierre had heard during the past two days a furious bombardment proceeding in that quarter, but when he scanned the defences, he could not perceive any practicable breach nor even the appearance of one. " Monsieur," said he, " you speak with great confidence. May God grant that it may be justified!" Both the Constable and Schomberg appeared to regard the taking of the town as already assured, and, as he took leave of them, the latter said : " Brother, I invite you to dine with me the day after to-morrow in Montauban." " Brother," answered Bassompierre, " that will be a Friday and a fish-day. Let us postpone it until Sunday, and do not fail to be there."

Bassompierre transmitted the order which he had received from the Constable to Chaulnes and Praslin, who instructed him to take charge of the mine, and to have everything in readiness for the diversion they were to make on the morrow.

The eventful day which, if Schomberg and his colleagues were to be believed, was destined to atone for all the toil and bloodshed of the past two months, arrived, and with it the King, the Constable, the Cardinal de Retz, Père Arnoux, Puisieux, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and many other distinguished persons, who were conducted by them to carefully-selected positions from which they would be able to enjoy an uninterrupted view of the storming of the town. At the same time, they ordered their servants to pack up their plate, linen, and so

forth, as they intended to sup and sleep in Montauban. " And many other things they did more ridiculous than I shall condescend to write down."

Early in the afternoon, the Guards' division received orders " to begin the dance," and Bassompierre fired his mine, which blew a big hole in the enemy's advanced-works in that quarter and sent an unfortunate young officer of the Guards, the Baron d'Auges, into another world. Mines, in those days, appear to have had an unpleasant way of taking toll of both sides. The Guards occupied the crater, but, in accordance with their orders, did not advance any further. At the same time, the troops at Ville-Bourbon made a similar diversion.

The great assault, however, tarried. It tarried so long that at length the King grew impatient, and sent to Schomberg and his colleagues to inquire the reason why they did not advance. They replied that there was no breach that was practicable. Presently, he sent again, and was informed that, though there was a breach, scaling-ladders would be required, and these had not yet arrived. The scaling-ladders were brought, and once more the King wanted to know why they did not attack. The answer was that the delay had enabled the enemy to repair the breach ; it would have to be reopened by a fresh bombardment.

" Finally," says Bassompierre, " after having wasted the whole day up to six o'clock in the evening, and kept 600 gentlemen and a great number of people of note under arms all day, without doing or attempting to do anything, unless it were to kill a good many people of the town who showed themselves, they sent to tell the King that they had freshly reconnoitred the place where the attack must be delivered, and that truly it was not practicable. And upon that everyone went home."

Next day, Louis XIII sent a message to Ville-Nouvelle requesting one of the two marshals or Bassompierre to come to Picqueos ; and it was decided that Bassompierre

should go. He found the King in his cabinet with the Constable, the Cardinal de Retz, and Roucellaï, and it was plain that his Majesty was in a very ill-humour. "Bassompierre," said he, "you have long been of opinion that nothing of any use would be accomplished on the side of Le Moustier." "Your Majesty will pardon me," answered Bassompierre, "but I never believed that everything that was proposed would succeed. Nevertheless, one must judge things by the results." The King then told him that Schomberg and his colleagues had assured him that in five days they would be able to establish a battery of their heaviest guns on a knoll within a very short distance of the walls, and open a breach which would enable them to storm the town; and inquired what he thought about it. Bassompierre replied that, if they did succeed in establishing a battery there, the town must fall; but he very much doubted whether the enemy would allow them to do it." "And I," exclaimed the King angrily, "refuse to wait for what they wish to do. For they are deceivers; and I will never believe anything they say again." The Constable here interposed, and begged his Majesty to remember that the generals at Le Moustier were as much mortified as he was at the fiasco of the previous day. And he asked that they might be given another chance of redeeming their promise to take the town. To this the King agreed, and Bassompierre was told to arrange another diversion when the time for the assault to be delivered should arrive.

However, it never did arrive. During the next few days the knoll was fortified without any interference from the enemy, and nothing remained but to get the guns into position. But, on the early morning of the 25th, the garrison exploded a mine under the knoll which blew it up with its defences, and followed this up by a murderous sally against the Picardy Regiment, who were driven out of their trenches with heavy loss. Three nights later, they made another sortie, this time at the expense of the

Champagne Regiment, and, breaking right through it, penetrated to the besiegers' battery-positions and destroyed one of their largest guns.

After this it was obviously impossible to continue the siege with the smallest hope of success ; the winter was coming on ; the army, badly paid and badly fed, with no confidence in its leaders, and harassed incessantly by a bold and resolute enemy, was becoming demoralised and was dwindling every day from death, sickness and desertion. Of 30,000 men who had encamped before Montauban at the end of August, only 12,000 effective combatants remained ; and the division before Ville-Bourbon was now so weak that its leaders were obliged to ask the Guards for assistance to enable them to hold their trenches against the perpetual attacks to which they were exposed.

On the morrow, the Constable came to Le Moustier and summoned a council of war to decide what was to be done. "Everyone saw plainly," says Bassompierre, "that we had no longer the means of continuing the siege ; but no one wished to propose that it should be abandoned." At length, Bassompierre took upon himself to do so and urged that they should "reserve the King, themselves and this army for a better future and a more convenient season." To this the other leaders offered no opposition, and the Constable proceeded to communicate their decision to the King. Louis XIII, with tears in his eyes, directed Bassompierre to supervise the raising of the siege, and afterwards to march, with the greater part of the army, on Monheurt, a little town on the Garonne which had just revolted, as he and the Constable desired to terminate the campaign with a success, however unimportant it might be.

To raise the siege without the risk of incurring further losses was far from an easy task, as, unless every precaution were taken, there was grave danger that the garrison, flushed with success, might sally out and fall upon the

rear of the army while it was crossing the Tarn. However, Bassompierre appears to have made his arrangements with considerable skill, and on November 10 the last of the troops were withdrawn, with no more serious interference than a little skirmishing.

The disastrous result of the siege of Montauban caused general exasperation against Luynes, who met with a very bad reception from the people of Toulouse—numbers of whose relatives and friends had fallen during the siege—when he accompanied the King thither about the middle of November. The High Catholic party was particularly furious, and accused the Constable, not only of incapacity, but of treason. What was a more serious matter for him, was the fact that the King was growing weary of his favourite.

This change in Louis XIII's attitude towards the man whom he had raised so high, and who had so long exercised such an absolute dominion over him, seems to have begun some months before ; but it was at first carefully concealed from all but two or three of his intimates.

“ One morning, after the siege of Saint-Jean-d'Angély,” says Bassompierre, “ as the Constable was returning from dinner, and was about to enter the King's lodging, with his Swiss and his guards marching before him, and the whole Court and the chief officers of the army following him, the King, perceiving his approach from a window, said to me : ‘ See, Bassompierre, it is the King who enters.’ ‘ You will pardon me, Sire,’ said I to him, ‘ it is a Constable favoured by his master, who is showing your grandeur and displaying the honours you have conferred upon him to the eyes of everyone.’ ‘ You do not know him,’ said he. ‘ He believes that I ought to give him the rest, and wants to play the King. But I will certainly prevent him doing that, so long as I am alive.’ Upon that I said to him : ‘ You are very unfortunate to have taken such fancies into your head ; he is also unfortunate, because you have conceived these suspicions against him ; and I still more so, because you have

revealed them to me. For, one of these days, you and he will shed a few tears, and then you will be appeased ; and afterwards you will act as do husbands and wives who, when they have made up their quarrels, dismiss from their service the servants to whom they had confided their ill-will towards each other. Besides, you will tell him that you have not confided your dissatisfaction with him to any save to myself and to certain others ; and we shall be the sufferers. And you have seen that, last year, the mere suspicion that he entertained that you might be inclined to favour me determined him to ruin me.'

" He [the King] swore to me with great oaths that he would never speak of it, whatever reconciliation there might be between them, and that he did not intend to open his mind to anyone on this matter, save Père Arnoux and myself, and that on my life I must engage never to open mine to anyone, save Père Arnoux, and only after he [the King] shall have spoken to him, and should command me to do it. I told him that he had but to command me, and that I had already given this command to myself, as it was of importance to my future and to my life."

A few days after this conversation, Bassompierre was sent to Paris, at which he was much relieved, " since he found that confidences of the King were very dangerous " ; and when, some weeks later, he rejoined the army at the beginning of the siege of Montauban, he took care never to approach his Majesty unless he were sent for.

" The resentment of the King against the Constable increased hourly, and the latter, whether it was that he felt assured of the King's affection, or that the important affairs which he had upon his hands prevented him thinking about it, or that his grandeur blinded him, took less care to entertain the King than he had done formerly. In consequence, the displeasure of the King augmented greatly, and every time that he was able to speak to me in private, he expressed to me the most violent resentment.

" On one occasion when I had come to see him, the Milord de Hay, Ambassador Extraordinary of the King of Great Britain, who had been sent to intervene in favour

of peace between the King and the Huguenots, had his first audience of the King, at the conclusion of which he went to visit the Constable. Puisieux, according to custom, came to know from the King what the milord had said at the audience. Upon which the King called me to make a third in their conversation and said to me : ' He [the Ambassador] is going to have audience of King Luynes ! ' I was very astonished at him speaking to me before M. de Puisieux and pretended to misunderstand him ; but he said to me : ' There is no danger before Puisieux, for he is in our secret.' ' There is no danger, Sire ! ' I exclaimed. ' Now I am assuredly undone, for he is a timorous and cowardly man, like his father the Chancellor, who at the first lash of the whip will confess everything, and will, in consequence, ruin all his adherents and accomplices.' "

The King began to laugh, and told Bassompierre that he would answer for Puisieux's discretion. Then he began a long tirade against his favourite, and appeared particularly indignant that the latter should, on the death of Du Vair, the Keeper of the Seals, which had occurred at the beginning of August, have persuaded him to give him the vacant post, notwithstanding that it was as contrary to usage as to common sense for a man to hold the Seals and the Constable's sword. ¹

Bassompierre left the royal presence, feeling very uneasy. He saw clearly that Luynes was losing his hold over the King ; but he knew that it might be some time before the young monarch would be able to summon up sufficient resolution to shake it off entirely ; and, meanwhile, if Puisieux, whom he thoroughly distrusted, were to abuse the King's confidence, and lead the Constable to believe that he was endeavouring to influence his Majesty against him, he would find himself in an even more difficult situation than he had the previous year. He

¹ Condé, on hearing of this, remarked that Luynes was a good Constable in time of peace and a good Keeper of the Seals in time of war, and this jest was repeated everywhere.

therefore decided that his safest course was “ to make some representations to him [Luynes] on the subject, for his good,” without, however, allowing the Constable to suspect that the King had spoken to him. They would probably be well received, for, since his return from Spain, the favourite’s manner towards him had been very cordial, and he appeared most anxious that Bassompierre should identify his interests with his own by marrying his niece.

“ Some days after this, happening to be in his cabinet with him, I told him that, as his very humble servant, devoted to his interests, I felt myself obliged to point out to him that he did not cultivate sufficiently the good graces of the King, and that he was not so assiduous in doing this as heretofore ; that, as the King was increasing in age and in knowledge of things, and he in charges, honours and benefits, he ought also to increase in submission towards his King, his master, and his benefactor, and that, in God’s name, I begged him to take care and to pardon the liberty I had taken in speaking to him concerning it, since it proceeded from my zeal and passion for his very humble service.”

The favourite took Bassompierre’s warning in very good part, but made light of it :

“ He answered that he thanked me and felt obliged for the solicitude which I had for the preservation of his favour, which would assuredly be very useful and profitable to me, and that I had begun to speak to him as a nephew, which he hoped I should be in a little while ; that he wished also to answer me as an uncle, and to tell me that I might rest assured that he knew the King to the bottom of his soul ; that he understood the means necessary to keep him, as he had known those to win him, and that he purposely gave him on occasion little causes for complaint, which served only to increase the warmth of the affection which he entertained for him. I saw clearly that he was of the same stamp as all other favourites, who believe that, once they have established their fortune, it will endure for ever, and do not recognise the approach of

their disgrace until they have no longer the means to prevent it."

During the closing weeks of the siege of Montauban, whenever the King had an opportunity of speaking to Bassompierre privately, he "complained incessantly of the Constable." The love—it was of a very innocent kind—which Louis had hitherto entertained for Luynes's beautiful wife, Marie de Rohan, no longer protected her husband. This love had, in fact, changed into hatred, since his Majesty had perceived that the lady was accepting other attentions, without doubt less platonic than his.

And he took a particularly mean way of avenging himself.

"What made me think worse of him [the King]," writes Bassompierre, "was that all of a sudden the extreme passion that he entertained for *Madame la Comptable* was converted into such hatred, that he warned her husband that the Duc de Chevreuse was in love with her. He told me that he had said this, upon which I said to him that he had done very ill, and that to make mischief between a husband and wife was to commit sin. 'God will pardon me for it, if it pleases Him,' he answered; 'but I have felt great pleasure in avenging myself on her and of inflicting this mortification upon him.' And he went on to say several things against him, and, amongst others, that before six months had passed, he would make him disgorge all that he had taken from him."

A few days after the siege of Montauban had been raised, the King's other two confidants, the Jesuit Père Arnoux and Puisieux, the former of whom suspected Luynes of desiring to make peace with the Protestants on their own terms, joined forces to procure the downfall of the favourite. But they had underrated the power which habit and the fear of change exercised over the cold heart and indolent mind of Louis XIII. He betrayed them to Luynes, or, perhaps, the pusillanimous Puisieux may have

betrayed his fellow-conspirator. Anyway, Luynes learned of the intrigue and insisted on the Jesuit's disgrace ; and " the first news that I had from him [the King]," says Bassompierre, " was that he had been constrained to abandon Père Arnoux to the hatred of the Constable." The King added that Bassompierre " might be assured that there was nothing against him." Nevertheless, says that gentleman, " I did not fail to be in great apprehension, although I could say that every time that the King had spoken to me on the subject I had warded off his blows, and that I had been infinitely distressed that he had ever made me the recipient of his confidence."

However, Bassompierre need not have been alarmed, as it was very soon to be beyond the power of Luynes to injure anyone.

On November 16 Bassompierre and his army encamped before Monheurt, and on the 18th the trenches were opened. A day or two later he had an exceedingly narrow escape of his life.

He was riding, followed by two aides-de-camp, from the trenches of the Piedmont Regiment, to those of the Normandy Regiment, a journey which he had made several times already without interference from the garrison, although it was well within musket-shot of the town, and " dressed in scarlet, with the cross on his cloak, and mounted on a white pony, he was easily recognisable." Suddenly, the advanced bastion and counterscarp bristled with musketeers, who began firing at him and " with such fury that he heard nothing but balls whistling about him." One ball struck the pommel of his saddle and another pierced his cloak, but he managed to reach a large tree without being hit, and took shelter behind it. Here he was in safety, though the enemy fired more than a hundred shots at it. At length, the firing ceased and, thinking that they had exhausted their ammunition, he mounted and galloped towards the

trenches of the Normandy Regiment. However, they had only been waiting for him to show himself, and, so soon as he did so, they began firing at him again as fiercely as ever. "But," says he, "as my hour was not yet come, God preserved me against the attempt; though I believe I was never nearer death than I was on that occasion."

The weather was very bad, rain falling incessantly, and the soldiers were nearly up to their knees in mud. Nevertheless, they worked well, and by the 22nd, on which day the siege-artillery arrived, they had pushed their trenches close to the walls.

Meanwhile, Bassompierre had received a secret communication from the Marquis de Mirambeau, the commander of the garrison, who offered to surrender Monheurt, in consideration of receiving a sum of 4,000 crowns and a formal pardon for his offence of having taken up arms against the King. The Maréchal de Roquelaure, lieutenant-general of Guienne, had lately arrived to take the nominal command of the siege operations. But he left their direction entirely in Bassompierre's hands, and, as Mirambeau had requested that he should not be informed of his offer, it was communicated to Louis XIII, who was still at Toulouse. This decided the King and the Constable to come to Monheurt, "in order to have the honour of taking it."

On the 23rd, Bassompierre, after inspecting one of his batteries, advanced a few paces in front of it to survey some point in the defences. "The gunners," he says, "not thinking that I was there, discharged their pieces, the wind of which threw me very rudely to the ground, and left me with a singing in my right ear, accompanied by insupportable twinges." Two hours later he was taken ill with fever, but he remained on duty all that day, during which the trenches were pushed up to the border of the moat. Next morning, however, he was so much worse that he wrote to the King and the Constable asking to be relieved of his command, and saying that he

proposed to go to La Réole, where he could secure skilled medical attention, for he was too prudent to trust himself to the care of the army surgeons. He also begged them to send him a doctor.

Next morning he received a very kind letter from the King, granting his request and informing him that he was sending a doctor, upon which he embarked in a boat, accompanied by his personal attendants and a guard of Swiss halberdiers, and set off down the Garonne towards La Réole.

On arriving at Tonneins, about midway between Monheurt and Marmande, he learned that a small force of cavalry was crossing the river to the right bank, and that they were the Constable's own company of gendarmes.

He sent for the officers in command to inquire where they were going, and was told that they had received orders from the Maréchal de Roquelaure to take up their quarters in a little town called Gontaud, about half-a-league from Marmande. He expressed his surprise that Roquelaure should send a small body of cavalry, unaccompanied by infantry, to an open town in the midst of the enemy's country, where there was a great danger of their being surprised; and, aware that the King and the Constable would certainly cancel the order if they were informed of it, begged the officers to return, while he sent a message to the King requesting that they should be quartered at Marmande, which was a walled town. But the officers pointed out that the baggage had already been sent on to Gontaud; and, on their assuring him that they would keep a sharp look-out that night, and on the morrow ask to be transferred to safer quarters, he allowed them to proceed, although he felt very uneasy.

On reaching Marmande, he felt so much worse that he decided to remain there for the night, instead of continuing his journey to La Réole, and therefore had himself carried to an inn in the suburb, and sent for a doctor. But the only one who could be found was a country-

practitioner, to whose tender mercies Bassompierre did not feel inclined to entrust himself. However, shortly afterwards, a quack doctor named Duboure, whom the Baron d'Estissac had sent after him, arrived on the scene. Duboure was none too sober, but he possessed remedies which afforded the patient some temporary relief, and about nine o'clock in the evening one of the King's own physicians, named Le Mire, whom his Majesty had sent, made his appearance. The great man, after consulting, for form's sake, with his humble colleagues, "proceeded to scarify him and apply leeches to his shoulders, in order to remove the furious tingling which he had in the head."

"This was about eleven o'clock, and, at the same time, we heard many pistol-shots in the street of the faubourg, which is on the bank of the Garonne. They were fired by the Constable's gendarmes, who were being pursued by the enemy, who had attacked them at Gontaud the same evening they arrived there. At this news, my servants hurriedly placed a napkin on my shoulders, which were covered with blood, put on my dressing-gown, and, in this state, had me carried away by four of my Swiss halberdiers and five or six other persons whom they had contrived to pick up. They accompanied me nearly to the gate of the town, and then ran back to barricade themselves in my lodging, to try and save themselves and my horses, plate and equipage. They believed that I had entered the town, and there only remained with me the four Swiss, the two doctors, Le Mire and Duboure, and two *valets de chambre*. But, as I approached the gate, the people of Marmande saluted me with several musket-shots, believing (as they told me afterwards) that I was the petard which the enemy were bringing to fasten to their gate. My people cried out that it was the general who commanded the army, whom they had come to welcome as he disembarked from his boat, and that, if they did not open, they would repent it. But, for all that, they could get nothing out of them, except permission for me to be placed in a little open

guard-house which was within the barrier. A man came to open the door and let me in, and at once closed it upon me, after which he threw himself upon a little drawbridge, which was forthwith raised. Thus, I found myself confined within this barrier, without being able to send any message to my servants, who, believing that I had entered the town, confined themselves to guarding my lodging ; and the people of the town refused to open the gate until seven o'clock the next morning. I was stretched on a table, all covered with blood from my scarification, which congealed and clung to the napkin which had been placed over it, so that it galled me from time to time, while my head ached intolerably, for I was in a high fever ; and I was covered only with a rather thin dressing-gown, in very cold weather, for it was the 26th of November. I can say that I was in the greatest torment and the most evil plight that I ever suffered in my life, which made me wish for death a hundred times."

When morning dawned, the good citizens of Marmande, having satisfied themselves that there were no Huguenots lurking in the vicinity, at length summoned up courage to open their gates, and the unfortunate Bassompierre was carried to an inn and put to bed. Here he lay for a fortnight between life and death, "stricken with a purple fever," and it was only his iron constitution which eventually turned the scale in his favour. The crisis once passed, however, he mended rapidly, and in a few days was sufficiently recovered to continue his journey to La Réole, and thence to Bordeaux, where he arrived on December 15, to await the King.

Louis XIII and the Constable had arrived at Monheurt on November 28, and had taken up their quarters at a village called Longuétile, about a league from the town. The place was taken on December 12 ; the lives of the inhabitants were spared, but the garrison was put to the sword, and the place pillaged and burned to the ground. Luynes, however, was not present to witness this sorry triumph. While the flames were devouring the

conquered town, he lay at Longuetille, in the grip of the same pestilential fever from which Bassompierre so narrowly escaped, and which was now ravaging the Royal army. The disasters of the campaign, and the unceasing anxiety as to the future to which he had been for some time a prey, had told upon his strength, and three days later he died, in his forty-fourth year. "He was little regretted by the King," says Bassompierre ; "while his death was hailed with joy by the bulk of the nation, with whom he had long been intensely unpopular. Even the Ultramontane party, whose cause he had so well served, received the news with satisfaction. They had been infuriated by the belief that he intended to make peace with the Huguenots, and ascribed the Montauban fiasco to the fact that the Almighty refused to make use of so unworthy an instrument for the destruction of the heretics.

CHAPTER XXVI

Who will govern the King and France?—The pretenders to the royal favour—Position of Bassompierre—The Cardinal de Retz and Schomberg join forces and secure for their ally De Vic the office of Keeper of the Seals—They propose to remove Bassompierre from the path of their ambition by separating him from the King—Bassompierre is offered the lieutenancy-general of Guienne and subsequently the government of Béarn, but declines both offices—He inflicts a sharp reverse upon Retz and Schomberg—Condé joins the Court—His designs—The rival parties: the party of the Ministers and the party of the marshals—*Monsieur le Prince* decides to ally himself with that of the Ministers—Mortifying rebuff administered by the King to the Ministers at the instance of Bassompierre—Failure of an attempt of the Ministers to injure Bassompierre and Créquy with Louis XIII—Arrival of the King in Paris—Affectionate meeting between him and his mother—Accident to the Queen.

LUYNES dead, who would govern the King and France? Such was the question which everyone was asking himself, for that Louis XIII, so jealous of his royal authority, yet too indolent to exercise it himself, would require someone to lean on was a foregone conclusion. There were many pretenders. There was Marie de' Medici, who, now that the man who had estranged her son from her was no more, might hope to recover in time much of the influence she had once exercised over the King. And Marie's triumph would mean that of Richelieu, who had now acquired so great an ascendancy over her that scandal asserted that he was her lover. There was the greedy and ambitious Condé, who had learned prudence from adversity, but was in other respects but little changed. Luynes, in the last months of his "reign," had separated Condé from the King, and tricked Richelieu out of the cardinal's hat which had been the secret condition of the prelate's reconciliation with the favourite, addressing a formal demand for

it to Gregory XV, accompanied by a private request to his Holiness not to accord it. But now the lists were again open to them. Then there were the Ministers : the Cardinal de Retz, whom Luynes had made the nominal chief of the Council, and his ally Schomberg, Superintendent of Finance ; the Chancellor Brulart de Sillery and his son Puisieux, the Minister for Foreign Affairs ; and old Jeannin. And all these persons felt that they might have to reckon seriously with Bassompierre, in whose society the King undoubtedly took more pleasure than in that of any of them, and whom, they knew, the late Constable had regarded as his only dangerous rival.

It is certain that, had Bassompierre been so minded, he would have stood an excellent chance of succeeding to Luynes's place as favourite, and that his elevation would have been well received, as he was exceedingly popular both at the Court and in the Army. But his epicurean wisdom rejected the idea of a life of gilded slavery ; to be obliged to forgo the society of his "beautiful mistresses," in order to dance attendance upon his youthful sovereign and make up his mind for him a dozen times a day, was not at all an attractive prospect to one who infinitely preferred pleasure to grandeur ; the royal favour, without the responsibilities of power, was sufficient for him.

The Cardinal de Retz, Schomberg and Puisieux had the advantage of being near the King at the time of the Constable's death. The first two at once joined forces against Puisieux and "aspired to become all-powerful and to restrain the King from doing anything except on their advice." They secured a decided success by persuading Louis XIII to bestow the vacant office of Keeper of the Seals upon De Vic, a counsellor of State, who was devoted to their interests, and then put their heads together to find a means of separating the King from Bassompierre, whom they regarded as a serious obstacle in the path of their ambition. Louis XIII

arrived at Bordeaux on December 21, and shortly afterwards the two Ministers proposed to him to leave Bassompierre in Guienne as lieutenant-general of that province, in place of the Maréchal de Roquelaure, who was to be compensated for the loss of his post by a present of 200,000 livres and the government of Lectoure. Having obtained his Majesty's consent to this arrangement, they sent Roucellaï to sound Bassompierre on the matter and "even offered to add to this charge that of marshal of France." But Bassompierre preferred to wait upon events and to see into whose hands the management of affairs would fall, foreseeing that whoever might secure it would not be strong enough to maintain his position without support, and "being assured that he would be very pleased to have him for a friend, and to give him a larger share of the cake than they [Retz and Schomberg] were offering him."

"When the King spoke to me of the lieutenancy-general [of Guienne], I answered that I should esteem myself more happy to occupy the post of Colonel-General of the Swiss near his person than any other away from it ; that I was only just recovering from a severe illness which demanded three months' repose, and that during that time I desired no other employment than that of my first office of Colonel-General. And to this his Majesty agreed."

Although foiled in this attempt to get Bassompierre out of the way, Retz and Schomberg presently returned to the charge, and having persuaded the Maréchal de Thémines to surrender the government of Béarn, in exchange for the lieutenancy-general of Guienne, offered it to Bassompierre. The government of Béarn, though, in the present circumstances, it could scarcely be regarded as a bed of roses, was a very honourable and lucrative post. But its acceptance would, of course, entail an almost complete separation from the King, and from—what was more important in Bassompierre's estimation

—the Court and Paris ; and he therefore returned the same answer as he had in the case of Guienne.

A day or two later, Bassompierre had the satisfaction of inflicting a sharp reverse upon the two Ministers.

The Cardinal and Schomberg had urged the King to follow up the capture of Monheurt by the surprise of Castillon, on the Dordogne, which, they declared, could very easily be carried out and would have an excellent effect. Now, Castillon belonged to the Duc de Bouillon, who, at the outbreak of hostilities, had entered into a compact with Louis XIII, which stipulated that this and other towns within his jurisdiction should "remain in the service of the King, but without making war on those of the Religion" ; while the King, on his side, promised that they should in no way be interfered with. To seize Castillon therefore would be a direct breach of this agreement, and could only be defended on the ground that the townsfolk had sent assistance to the Huguenots, of which there was no evidence of any value. Nevertheless, Louis XIII allowed himself to be persuaded by the two Ministers to consent to this being done, provided that the rest of the Council did not oppose it. When, however, the project was laid before the Council, Bassompierre rose and denounced it in a vigorous speech, in which he declared that, if executed, it would be a "great stain on the King's honour and reputation," after which he proceeded to give his Majesty some very wholesome advice on the danger of breaking his royal word.

"Sire," said he, "it is easy for a man to deceive a person who trusts him, but it is not easy to deceive a second time. A promise badly observed only once deprives him who breaks it of the trust of the whole world." And he stigmatized the counsel which had been given the King, of the source of which he pretended ignorance, as "interested, evil-intentioned and rash," which, if followed, would probably result in driving Bouillon into rebellion, and with him numbers of

Protestants who had hitherto remained neutral, since they would feel that it was impossible to trust the word of the King.

One or two other members of the Council signified their agreement with the views expressed by Bassompierre, upon which the King announced that he had come to the same conclusion, to the great discomfiture of Retz and Schomberg, who were forced to recognise that their design of governing the young monarch was likely to prove a much more difficult task than they had bargained for.

Louis XIII left Bordeaux on the last day of the year, and travelled by easy stages towards Paris. At Château-neuf-sur-Charente, where he arrived on January 6, 1622, another pretender to Luynes's shoes appeared upon the scene, in the person of Condé.

“*Monsieur le Prince*,” says Bassompierre, “who was extremely cunning and supple, was equally courteous to everyone, without inclining to any side, until he had perceived the tendency of the market. His design was to persuade the King to continue the Huguenot war, for three reasons, in my opinion: first, because of the ardent affection which he had for his religion and his hatred against the Huguenot party; secondly, because he thought that he could govern the King better in time of war than in time of peace, since he would undoubtedly be lieutenant-general of his army; and, lastly, in order to separate him from the Queen his mother, the Chancellor and the old Ministers, who were his antipathy.”

In order to ascertain the state of the Court, Condé addressed himself to the Abbé Roucellaï, an adroit and insinuating personage, who had been in turn the protégé of Concini, the Queen-Mother and Luynes, and who, now that the Constable was dead, had decided to seek a new patron in *Monsieur le Prince*. The abbé told him that there were two parties at the Court. On one side, were the three Ministers, Retz, Schomberg and the new Keeper of

the Seals, De Vic, "who desired to possess the King's mind to the exclusion of everyone else"; on the other, the three marshals of France, Praslin, Chaulnes, and Créquy¹ and some others, who were resolved not to submit to this. He added that the King conversed frequently with Bassompierre and appeared to have a rather high opinion of him, and that, if the latter had any ambition to succeed to the favour of the late Constable, it might very well be realised. That, however, did not seem to be his desire, "although he was disposed to accept the share in the King's good graces which his services might merit." Bassompierre and the Ministers, he told the prince, were "not always of the same opinion," and only a few days before he had spoken very bitterly against them before his Majesty in a council. Condé then inquired if Bassompierre were in favour of continuing the war against the Huguenots, and Roucellaï answered that he had pressed Luynes to enter into negotiations with Rohan, from fear that the Royal army would be obliged to raise the siege of Montauban. As a result of this conversation, the prince sent Roucellaï to Bassompierre to inform him that he wished to speak to him and ascertain his views in regard to the war.

Before seeing Bassompierre, however, Condé had an interview with the Ministers, whom he found in warlike mood, not because they believed that any useful purpose could be served by a continuance of this fratricidal strife, but for the same selfish reasons as he himself desired it, namely, "to keep the King so far as possible from Paris, in order the better to govern him." He then approached Créquy, who answered that he was in favour of peace, provided that it could be obtained on advantageous and honourable terms. Bassompierre gave him a similar reply, when he spoke to him on the matter, and added that he would find Praslin and all other good servants of

¹ Créquy had been created a marshal on December 24, 1621;

the King of the same opinion. "It is singular," said the prince ; "all you men of war, who ought to desire it, and can only make your way by means of it, want peace ; and the lawyers and statesmen demand war." "I answered," says Bassompierre, "that I desired war, and that it ought to bring me fortune and advancement, but only on condition that it was for the service of the King and the good of the State ; and that otherwise I should esteem myself a bad servant of the King and a bad Frenchman, if, for my own private advantage, I were to desire a thing which must cause both so much evil and prejudice."

After this sharp, if indirect, rebuke, Condé left him and told Roucellaï that, after sounding Créquy and Bassompierre, he found that he was likely to have more in common with the Ministers than with them.

During the remainder of the journey to Paris, skirmishes between the rival parties were of frequent occurrence, each doing everything possible to prejudice the King against the other. At Sauzé, where the Court arrived on the 10th, Bassompierre again scored at the expense of the Ministers.

Louis XIII was about to sit down to cards with Bassompierre and Praslin, when the three Ministers were announced.

"The King said to us as he saw them enter : ' *Mon Dieu*, how tiresome these people are ! When one is thinking of amusing oneself, they come to torment me, and most often they have nothing to tell me.' I, who was very pleased to have the chance of giving them a rebuff in revenge for the ill turns they were doing me every day, said to the King : ' What, Sire ! Do these gentlemen come without being sent for by you, or without having first informed your Majesty that there is something of importance to deliberate upon, and then ask for your time ? ' ' No,' said he, ' they never inform me, and come when it pleases them, and most often when it does not please me, as they do now.' ' Jesus, Sire ! is it possible ? ' I replied. ' That is to treat you like a scholar,



LOUIS XIII., KING OF FRANCE.

From an engraving by Picart.

and make themselves your tutors, who come to give you a lesson when it pleases them. You ought, Sire, to conduct your affairs like a King, and every day, on your arrival at the place where you purpose to spend the night, one of your Secretaries of State should come to tell you if there be any news of importance which requires the assembling of your Council, and then you should send for them to come to you, either at that same hour, or at one which will be most convenient to you. And, if they have anything to tell you, let them inform you of it first, and then send them word when they are to come to you. It was thus that the late King your father conducted his affairs, and your Majesty ought to do likewise ; and if they [the Ministers] should come to you otherwise [i.e., without being sent for], to send them away, and to tell them of your intention firmly, once for all.'

" The King took the representations I had made him in very good part, and said that, from that moment, he would put my counsel into practice ; and he went on talking to the Maréchal de Praslin and myself. When our conversation had continued for some little time, *Monsieur le Prince* approached the King and said : ' Sire, these gentlemen [the Ministers] await you to hold the council.' The King turned to *Monsieur le Prince* with an angry countenance and exclaimed : ' What council, Monsieur ? I have not sent for them. I shall end by being their valet ; they come when they please, and when it does not please me. Let them go away, if they wish to, and let them come only when I shall send for them ; it is for them to consult my convenience and to send to inquire when that may be, and not for me to consult theirs. I desire that, at the end of each day's journey, a Secretary of State should present himself at my lodging to inform me what news there is, and, if it be of importance, I will name a time to deliberate upon it ; but I will never allow them to name it ; for I am their master.'

" *Monsieur le Prince* was a little surprised at this response and was very curious to know from what shop it came. He went back to tell them [the Ministers], who requested him to inform the King that they were come merely to receive the honour of his commands, as courtiers, and not otherwise, and that if only his Majesty would

speak a word to them, they would go away. The King did so, but very brusquely, and it was :—

“ ‘ Messieurs, I am going to play cards with this company.’ Upon which they made him a profound reverence and withdrew, very astonished.”

The Ministers soon ascertained whom they had to thank for the very mortifying rebuff which they had received from the King, and were more incensed than ever against Bassompierre. The latter, who had been on very friendly terms with the Cardinal de Retz until his Eminence’s designs upon the King had brought their interests into collision, went to see him the next day and assured him that, so far as he himself was concerned, he was still his very humble servant. But he told him that he had no love for his colleagues, Schomberg and De Vic, and wished them to know it. The Cardinal begged him to be reconciled with them, but within forty-eight hours two incidents occurred which removed all hope of this.

It happened that, the following evening, news arrived that the Maréchal de Roquelaure was dangerously ill and that his recovery was considered hopeless. “ Upon which,” says Bassompierre, “ these gentlemen [the three Ministers] and *Monsieur le Prince* went in a body to the King to demand the charge of marshal of France, which he [Roquelaure] had, for M. de Schomberg. The only answer which the King made them was to say : “ And Bassompierre—what shall he become ? ” This crude reply deeply affected M. de Schomberg, and from that day we ceased to speak to one another.” ¹

The second incident, which followed closely upon the first, served to embitter still further the relations between these two gentlemen.

¹ The Maréchal de Roquelaure recovered and lived until 1625, so neither Schomberg nor Bassompierre received the coveted bâton. However, shortly afterwards, the King gave Bassompierre the rank of first *mâréchal de camp*, and with it authority over the other brigadier-generals and other privileges.

" It happened on the morrow that the King only travelled one stage,¹ at which we [Créquy and himself] were annoyed, because we saw that these gentlemen [the Ministers] were purposely delaying the King's arrival, thinking, if time were allowed them, to usurp the authority before he had seen the Queen his mother and the old Ministers. The Maréchal de Créquy and I, while warming ourselves in the King's wardrobe, complained of these short journeys, upon which the Comte de la Roche-guyon told us that they were made out of consideration for the French and Swiss Guards, who otherwise would be unable to follow us. We said then that this consideration ought not to occasion such a long delay ; that we, who were respectively in command of the two regiments of Guards, did not complain, that the Guards would march so far as the King pleased, and that we could make them do what we wished. Out of these last words, which were reported to the Ministers, they proceeded to compound three dishes for the King, saying that we boasted of making the two regiments of Guards do what we wished, and that we could turn them in whatever direction we pleased. They attacked the King on his weak side, and he was angry at seeing that we were compromising his authority.

" The evening before he arrived at Poitiers, he told me that he desired to speak to me on the following morning, and said to me : ' I promised to tell you all that might be said to me concerning you. That is why, since it has been reported to me that you were boasting of being able to persuade the Swiss to do all that you wished, and even against my service, I desired to make you understand that I do not approve of such discourse being held, and less by you than by another, seeing that I have always had entire confidence in you.'

" ' God be praised, Sire,' I answered, ' that my enemies, seeking every means to injure me, are unable to find anything save what is easy for me to avert and bring to naught. This accusation is of that quality, and you can learn the truth from their own mouths, although it is

¹ From Coutré to Vivonne, a distance of about two and a half leagues.

but little accustomed to issue from them. Ask them, Sire, on what subject I said that I would make the Swiss do what I wished, and if they do not tell you that it was on that of their making long or short marches, about which M. de Créquy and I were complaining to one another, since they make arrangements for your Majesty to travel a shorter distance each day to return to Paris than a parish procession would cover, I am willing to lose my life. And your Majesty can judge whether that touches you or not, and whether you ought to regard this discourse as a boast of being able to employ the Swiss against your service.'"

The King did not accept Bassompierre's proposal to confront him with his accusers; but he sent for two valets of his wardrobe, who had been present during the conversation between him and Créquy, and questioned them in his presence. They confirmed what Bassompierre had just told him, and his Majesty expressed himself satisfied that he had spoken the truth.

This clumsy attempt to injure Bassompierre recoiled upon its authors in a manner that was distinctly embarrassing for them. A few days later, when the King was at Châtellerault, the Ministers proposed that he should travel on the following day only so far as La Haye-Descartes, on the right bank of the Creuse, a very short day's journey. Louis, however, announced his intention of going on to Sainte-Maure, adding significantly that it seemed to him that, if they could have their way, he would not reach Paris for three months.

These squabbles between the jealous and spiteful courtiers and Ministers who surrounded Louis XIII, to all appearance so trifling, were in reality of great political importance. For they were all manœuvres in the struggle to dominate the indolent and fickle mind, and, with it, the policy, of this young monarch, who, while so punctilious in exacting all the respect which he considered due to his royal dignity, was ready to surrender the sovereign authority to the favourite of the moment. And

upon the result of that struggle hung the destinies, not only of France, but of Europe.

On January 27, Louis XIII arrived in Paris, where Marie de' Medici was awaiting him. The meeting between them was most affectionate. Marie expressed the greatest joy at seeing her son return to his capital so well in health and now indeed the master ; and the King replied that he intended to prove to everyone that never did son love or honour his mother more. Marie believed him too easily. Louis XIII was twenty-one and not nearly so manageable as he had been as a lad ; and he feared the authoritative temper of Richelieu, of whom the Nuncio Corsini wrote to Gregory XV that he was " of a character to tyrannise over both the King and his mother." Besides, to re-establish her influence over her son it was necessary for the Queen-Mother to keep him near her, and circumstances were to render this impossible.

Notwithstanding that the country was rent by civil war, and that so many distinguished families were in mourning for relatives fallen before Montauban, the winter in Paris seems to have been as gay as ever. " The Court was very beautiful, and the ladies also," says Bassompierre, " and during the Carnival several fine comedies and grand ballets were performed." In the middle of March, however, a most unfortunate incident occurred, which cast a gloom over both Court and capital.

Early in 1622, to the great joy of the nation, the Queen had been declared pregnant. Prayers were offered up in all the churches in France for her safe delivery, and all those about her Majesty's person were strictly enjoined not to allow her to exert herself, to which instructions, however, they unfortunately appear to have paid but little heed. One evening, Anne of Austria and a party of courtiers, amongst whom were the widowed Duchesse de Luynes and Mlle. de Verneuil, went to spend the evening with the Princesse de Condé, who was ill and confined to

her bed. On their way back to the Queen's apartments, they were passing through the *grande salle* of the Louvre, when Madame de Luynes and Mlle. de Verneuil seized their royal mistress by the arms and began to run. They had not, however, gone many paces when the Queen tripped and fell on her face. A few hours later, to the general dismay, it was known that her Majesty had had a miscarriage.

Louis XIII was furiously indignant, as well he might be, and wrote to the two delinquents with his own hand, ordering them to retire from Court. It is probable that the disgrace of *Madame la Connétable*, against whom, as we know, his Majesty already had a grievance, might have lasted some considerable time, had not her marriage with the Duc de Chevreuse, who stood high in the King's favour, paved the way for her return.

CHAPTER XXVII

Question of the Huguenot War the principal subject of contention between the two parties—Condé and the Ministers demand its continuance—Marie de' Medici, prompted by Richelieu, advocates peace—Secret negotiations of Louis XIII with the Huguenot leaders—Soubise's offensive in the West obliges the King to continue the war—Louis XIII advances against the Huguenot chief, who has established himself in the île de Rié—Condé accuses Bassompierre of "desiring to prevent him from acquiring glory"—Courage of the King—Passage of the Royal army from the île du Perrier to the île de Rié—Total defeat of Soubise—Siege of Royan—The King in the trenches—His remarkable coolness and intrepidity under fire—Capitulation of Royan—The Marquis de la Force created a marshal of France—Conversation between Louis XIII and Bassompierre—Diplomatic speech of the latter.

MEANTIME, the struggle between the two parties, which had begun on the journey from Bordeaux to Paris, continued at the Louvre. Condé and his allies were unable to prevent the Queen-Mother from entering the Council, but they succeeded in excluding the man who possessed her mind. Richelieu spoke through her mouth, however, and those who remembered her regency were astonished at the prudence, address, and firmness which she now displayed.

The war against the Huguenots was the principal subject of contention. Marie de' Medici, under the influence of Richelieu, the old Ministers the Chancellor Sillery and Jeannin, Puisieux, and the generals, wished for peace; Condé and the new Ministers demanded the continuance of the war. Condé saw in the war the means of separating the King from his mother, and commanding the army in the name of Louis XIII. A superstitious hope made him particularly anxious to have large military forces at his disposal. An astrologer had predicted to him that he would become King at the age of thirty-four, and

he was now in his thirty-fourth year. He desired, therefore, to prove his devotion to the Catholic religion, and to be in a position to seize the crown at the date when Louis XIII and his younger brother were apparently destined to die.

Marie brought to the Council the arguments with which Richelieu had furnished her on the grave situation of external affairs. The House of Austria, she pointed out, was everywhere aggressive and everywhere successful. In Germany, the Empire had reduced Bohemia to submission. The unfortunate Elector Palatine, deprived of the Upper Palatinate by Maximilian of Bavaria, and of the Lower Palatinate by Tilly, General of the Catholic League, and Gonzalvo de Cordoba, commander of the Spanish forces, had been obliged to take refuge in Holland. Philip IV, on the expiration of the twelve years' truce with Holland in 1621, had called upon the Dutch to acknowledge his supremacy, and, on their refusal, had attacked them. The Spaniards mocked at the Treaty of Madrid, and, so far from evacuating the Valtellina, as they had engaged to do, had invaded the country of the Grisons, in concert with the Archduke Leopold, and obliged them to submit to a humiliating treaty which deprived them of the suzerainty of the Valtellina.

Prompted by Richelieu, Marie urged upon the Council the imperative necessity of pacifying France, in order to be in a position to intervene in the affairs of Europe and arrest the alarming progress which the House of Austria was making. "To enter into a civil war," said she, "is not the road to arrive at it, as was manifest during the siege of Montauban, when, in place of executing the Treaty of Madrid, they [the Spaniards] pushed their armies further and advanced by much their design to arrive at the monarchy of Europe. Although assuredly it is better to perish rather than abate anything of the royal dignity, it seems that it [the dignity] is preserved, if peace and the pardon of their crimes is given to them [the

Huguenots], without restoring to them any of the places of which they have been deprived."

Condé and his allies pretended, on the contrary, that it was necessary before everything, and at all costs, to subdue the internal enemy and to check the audacity of the Huguenots, immensely encouraged by the successful resistance of Montauban. La Force and his sons had resumed hostilities in Guienne, and many places in that province which had submitted to the King had revolted anew. In Lower Languedoc, masters of Nîmes, Montpellier, Uzès, Privas, and a number of smaller towns, the assembly of the "circle," had ordered or, at any rate, authorised, the most disgraceful excesses, and between thirty and forty churches, amongst which were some of the finest monuments of the Middle Ages, had been ruined. In the West, the Rochellois were masters of the sea ; Saint-Luc, who had vainly endeavoured to make head against them, was blockaded in the port of Brouage ; and a multitude of privateers preyed upon the commerce of the Atlantic coast.

At the beginning of 1622, the Rochellois and the predatory nobles who made common cause with them conceived the bold project of occupying the mouths of the Loire and the Gironde, in order to hold all the commerce of those two rivers to ransom. The revolt of Royan, on the right bank of the Gironde, and the occupation of two other strong points had already resulted in the virtual blockade of that river ; while Soubise, violating the oath which he had taken at the capitulation of Saint-Jean-d'Angély not to bear arms again against his sovereign, charged himself with the Loire, descended with a considerable force on Sables d'Olonne, in order to raise the Protestants of Poitou, and overran all the country up to the suburbs of Nantes.

Thus tricked by the Spaniards and braved by the Protestants, Louis XIII had to choose between his enemies. For a time he appeared inclined to listen to

the advice of his mother—or rather of Richelieu—and, unknown to Condé and his supporters, authorised Lesdiguières to negotiate with Rohan. “And that nothing might be revealed,” says Bassompierre, “save to M. de Puisieux and myself, whom he commanded to keep the affair very secret, he wished that M. des Lesdiguières sent duplicate despatches; one copy to be read and deliberated upon in the Council; the other, which was private and addressed to M. de Puisieux, to be communicated only to the King, who informed me of its contents.” The negotiations progressed so far that Louis promised to receive a deputation from the Reformed churches, and threatened the Spanish Ambassador to go to Lyons and organise an army to march to the assistance of the Grisons, if Spain did not forthwith withdraw from their country and the Valtellina. But the progress of Soubise and the disobedience of d’Épernon, who declined to send troops from his governments of Saintonge and the Angoumois to the assistance of the hard-pressed Royalists of Poitou, gave the victory to Condé and his adherents; the King decided to march in person against Soubise, and, on March 20, without waiting for the arrival of the Protestant deputies, he left Paris for Orléans, accompanied by the Queen-Mother, who was determined to keep within reach of him so long as she could.

From Orléans, the King, still accompanied by Marie, proceeded to Blois, and thence by water to Nantes, where the army was to assemble, and where on the 11th he was joined by Bassompierre, who had been summoned by courier from Paris.

On his arrival at Nantes, Louis XIII learned that Soubise was endeavouring to establish himself in the île de Rié, a maritime district of Lower Poitou, separated from the mainland by vast salt marshes and small rivers, which at high tide the sea rendered impassable. If the Huguenot leader were permitted to entrench himself there, it was a position from which it would be exceedingly

difficult to dislodge him ; but this the King resolved not to allow him time to do ; and, leaving the Queen-Mother, who had fallen ill, at Nantes, like a true son of Henri IV, he marched at once upon the enemy.

The Royal army consisted of from 10,000 to 12,000 men ; that of Soubise from 6,000 to 7,000 ; but the latter had the advantage of position and seven pieces of cannon ; while the attacking force was, of course, unable to transport its artillery across the marshes. The enterprise would therefore have been a hazardous one, with a watchful and resolute enemy to contend with. On this occasion, however, Soubise showed neither the vigilance of a general nor the courage of a soldier. The approach of the enemy much sooner than he had foreseen appears to have disconcerted his plans altogether, and, instead of attempting to defend the approaches to the Île de Rié, he thought only of re-embarking his troops in a squadron of vessels which he had at his disposal, and making his escape with the plunder he had collected to La Rochelle.

In the afternoon of April 14, Marillac, with a small force of infantry, occupied the Île du Perrier, adjoining the Île de Rié, and early on the following morning Bassompierre was ordered by Condé to follow with the rest of the infantry. Condé then proposed that they should ford an arm of the sea " wide as the Marne," which separated the islands of Perrier and Rié, and where at low tide, which would be at midday, the peasants had told him, the water would be only waist-deep. Bassompierre, however, protested against this, pointing out that, if the enemy offered the least opposition to their passage, the tide would rise before half the troops had crossed, and even if they were allowed to cross unopposed, they would find themselves at a great disadvantage without cavalry or cannon. He added that, apart from these considerations, he ought certainly to await the arrival of the King. " For if you defeat M. de Soubise," said he, " he [the King] will

take it ill that you have not shared the honour of the victory with him ; and, if some reverse befalls you, he will blame your precipitation, and will accuse you of not having wished or deigned to wait for him."

Monsieur le Prince took this remonstrance in very bad part, and declared that he saw plainly that Bassompierre was " of the cabal who desired to prevent him from acquiring glory." But he sent him to the King to beg him to come at once with the cavalry, and when his Majesty arrived on the scene, it was decided to wait until midnight and to cross to the Île de Rié at another spot, where they were informed there would be less water.

In the course of the evening, Louis XIII displayed for the first time that cool courage which he invariably afterwards showed in war, and which, if it had been combined with the same degree of moral resolution, would have made him a really remarkable man :—

" While the King, stretched on a miserable bed," says Bassompierre, " was consulting with us about the passage, a great alarm spread throughout the camp that the enemy was upon us ; and, in an instant, fifty persons rushed into the King's chamber, who declared that the enemy was at hand. I knew well that this was impossible, since it was high tide, and they could not pass. Instead, therefore, of being alarmed, I wished to see how the King would take it, in order that I might regulate the proposals which I might in future have to make to him, according to the firmness or agitation which he displayed. This young prince, who was lying down on the bed, sat up on hearing this rumour, and, with a countenance more animated than usual, said to them : ' Gentlemen, the alarm is without, and not in my chamber, as you see ; it is there you must go.' And, at the same time, he said to me : ' Go as quickly as you can to the Bridge of Avrouet, and send me your news promptly. You, Zamet, go out and find *Monsieur le Prince*, and M. de Praslin and Marillac will stay with me. I shall arm myself and place myself at the head of my Guards.' I was delighted to see the confidence and judgment of a man of his age so

mature and so perfect. The alarm was, as I supposed, a false one, arising from a very trifling incident."

All the arrangements for the passage of the army had been entrusted to Bassompierre. The troops assembled at ten o'clock, and a little before midnight the order to advance was given. At the spot where the Guards were to cross, however, the water was so deep that they sent to inform Bassompierre that it was impossible to pass. He went there, and finding that it would be a very difficult undertaking, led them to another ford, by which he crossed himself to the île de Rié, and saw no sign of any enemy. He returned and reported that the ford was practicable and that their passage would be unopposed, and the whole army passed without mishap; though when Bassompierre crossed for the second time, at the head of the rearguard, the tide was beginning to rise, and the water was nearly up to his chin.¹

On reaching the shore, the troops encamped and lighted a great number of fires to dry their clothes. At daybreak they were formed in order of battle, and, after a march of about two leagues, came in sight of the enemy. Soubise and his cavalry, to the number of five or six hundred, fled at once in the direction of La Rochelle, without striking a blow. Part of the infantry had already embarked in the launches that had arrived to take them off; the rest threw down their arms and demanded quarter. But this was refused to the majority of them, and more than 1,500 were shot or cut down in cold blood; while as many more were taken prisoners and sent to the galleys. The rest fled across the marshes, in which some of them were drowned, while many others were slain by the troops of La Rochefoucauld, governor of Poitou, or by the peasants, furious at the devastation which the

¹ Tallemant des Réaux, little benevolent in general towards Bassompierre, renders him justice on this occasion. "At the Sables d'Olonne," says he, "he acquired reputation, risked his life, and showed the way to the others; for he plunged up to his neck in the water."—*Historiette de Bassompierre*.

Huguenots had committed. Only some four hundred succeeded in effecting their escape and making their way to La Rochelle.

Leaving a force under the Comte de Soissons to watch La Rochelle on the land side, while Guise was directed to blockade it by sea, Louis XIII marched southwards, with the intention of raising the blockade of the Gironde by the reduction of Royan. During the siege, the King gave further proofs of that courage and presence of mind which Bassompierre had admired before the attack on the Île de Rié.

“ That same evening I went to the King in his quarters, and he told me that he was coming to see our trench at five o’clock the next morning . . . and desired me to await him at the commencement of it. He came, accompanied by M. d’Épernon and M. de Schomberg. It was the first time he had ever been in the trenches, and he did me the honour to say to me : ‘ Bassompierre, I am a novice here ; tell me what I must do, so that I may not make mistakes.’ In this I found little difficulty, for he was more prodigal of his safety than any of us would have been, and mounted three or four times on to the banquette of the trench, where he was exposed to the fire of the enemy, to reconnoitre. And he stayed there so long that we trembled at the danger he was incurring, which he braved with more coolness and intrepidity than an old captain would have shown, and gave orders for the work of the following night as though he had been an engineer. While he was returning, I saw him do what pleased me extremely. After we had remounted our horses, at a certain passage which the enemy knew, they fired a cannon-shot, which passed two feet above the head of the King, who was talking to M. d’Épernon. I was riding in front of him, and turned round, fearing that the shot might have struck him. ‘ *Mon Dieu, Sire,*’ I exclaimed, ‘ that ball was near killing you ! ’ ‘ No, not me,’ said he, ‘ but M. d’Épernon.’ He neither started nor lowered his head, as so many others would have done ; and afterwards, perceiving that some of those who accompanied him had drawn aside, he said to them : ‘ What ! Are you afraid that they will fire again ? They will have to

reload.' I have witnessed many and various actions of the King in several perilous situations, and I can affirm, without flattery or adulation, that I have never seen a man, not to say a king, who was more courageous than he was. The late King, his father, though, as everyone knows, celebrated for his valour, did not display a like intrepidity."

It is not the degree, but the kind of courage, which is remarkable at his age. Bassompierre, however, relates an instance of equal coolness in a boy, who had not the same strong motive to self-possession as was furnished by the consciousness of being the object of the whole army's attention :

" The enemy had constructed a barricade in their fosse, on the side of the sea, and a palisade, which hindered us from being entirely masters of their fosse. I sent my volunteer, a young lad of sixteen, to reconnoitre it. This lad had, the previous year, executed with other camp-boys the most hazardous works at the siege of Montauban, which the soldiers refused to undertake. He had received several wounds, amongst others a musket-ball through the body, of which I got him cured. This young rogue undertook a number of dangerous works by the piece, and the camp-boys worked under him and made a great deal of money. He went to reconnoitre this barricade with the same bearing and as much boldness as the best sergeant in the army ; and after getting a musket-ball through his breeches and another through the brim of his hat, returned to us and made his report, which was very judicious."

Royan capitulated on May 11, and shortly afterwards La Force surrendered the town of Sainte-Foy and returned to his allegiance, in return for the bâton of Marshal of France. Louis XIII, who had been given to understand that both Bassompierre and Schomberg were deeply mortified that a rebel should have been created a marshal before either of them, sent for the former and said to him : " Bassompierre, I know that you are angry that I am making M. de La Force Marshal of France, and

that you and M. de Schomberg complain of it, and with reason ; but it is not I who am the cause of it, so much as *Monsieur le Prince*, who counselled me to do it, for the good of my affairs, and in order to leave nothing behind me in Guienne which might prevent me passing promptly into Languedoc. Nevertheless, be sure that what you desire I shall do for you, whom I love and hold as my good and faithful servant."

Bassompierre tells us that at that time he had no particular desire for the office of marshal, "since, in his opinion, it was that of an old man, while he wished to play the part of a gallant of the Court for some years longer." He therefore assured his Majesty that he had been entirely misinformed, and that, so far from being annoyed at La Force's appointment, he regarded it as a most proper one, since he was an old man and a soldier of great experience, who had been promised the bâton by the late King and would have received it, if Henri IV had lived another month ; that, although he had been a rebel, he was one no longer ; and that it was "a signal example of the kindness of the King to forget the faults of his servants, in order to remember and recompense their merits and their services." And he added that he did not aspire to the office of marshal or any other charge, unless his Majesty "out of pure kindness and desire to recognise his service," wished to confer it upon him, and that he "very humbly besought him never to allow any consideration for him to prevent him doing what he judged to be for the good of his service."

This diplomatic speech greatly pleased the King, who thanked Bassompierre and told him that he might rely on him to advance his interests. He then sent for Schomberg, who, much less tactful than his colleague, pressed his Majesty to make him a marshal conjointly with La Force, and proposed that Bassompierre should be created one also, "though this was chiefly in order to strengthen his own request."

CHAPTER XXVIII

Condé and his allies offer to secure for Bassompierre the position of favourite, if he will join forces with them to bring about the fall of Puisieux—Refusal of Bassompierre—Condé complains to Louis XIII of Bassompierre's hostility to him—Bassompierre informs the King of the proposal which has been made him—Louis XIII orders *Monsieur le Prince* to be reconciled with Bassompierre—Siege of Négrépelisse—The town is taken by storm—Terrible fate of the garrison and the inhabitants—Fresh differences between Condé and Bassompierre—Discomfiture of *Monsieur le Prince*—Bassompierre placed temporarily in command of the Royal army, captures the towns of Carmain and Cuq-Toulza—Offer of Bassompierre to resign his claim to the marshal's bâton in favour of Schomberg—Surrender of Lunel—Massacre of the garrison by disbanded soldiers of the Royal army—Bassompierre causes eight of the latter to be hanged—Lunel in danger of being destroyed by fire with all within its walls—Bassompierre, by his presence of mind, saves the situation—Schomberg and Bassompierre—The latter is promised the marshal's bâton.

AT Moissac, where Louis XIII arrived in the first week in June, Condé approached Bassompierre and invited him to meet him “ in a kind of chapel which is in the cloister of the abbey,” as he desired to confer with him on a matter of great importance. Thither Bassompierre repaired and found the prince in the company of his allies, Retz and Schomberg. All three forthwith began to inveigh against Puisieux, whose presumption, they declared, they were no longer able to endure. Although only a Secretary of State, he was admitted to greater intimacy with the King than *Monsieur le Prince* himself, sought to prejudice his Majesty against those with whom he was not on good terms, conducted separate negotiations, which he declined to communicate to them, and prevented the execution of the decisions of the Council, if he had not previously approved of them. Since the death of the late Constable, they had, they said, endeavoured “ to prevent the King from embarking in a new affection,” and they

were of opinion that it would be better for his Majesty to have no favourite.

“ However, since they saw that his inclination was to be dominated by someone, they preferred that it should be by a brave man, of high birth and esteemed for his knowledge of the arts of peace as well as of those of war, rather than by a man of the pen like M. de Puisieux, who would turn everything upside down ; and that they were all resolved to conspire to bring about his ruin, as they were to assist in the aggrandisement of my fortune, and to persuade the King, who was already favourably inclined towards me, to favour me entirely with the honour of his good graces, provided that I were willing to promise them two things : the one, to co-operate with them to ruin M. de Puisieux and to detach myself entirely from his friendship ; the other, to associate myself entirely with them and combine our designs and counsels, in the first place, for the good of the King’s service, in the second, for our common interest and preservation. And they begged me to come to a prompt decision upon this matter and to acquaint them with it.”

Bassompierre felt quite certain that the proposal which had just been made to him was nothing but a skilfully-baited trap, and that the intention of Condé and his friends was “ to penetrate his design and then to reveal it to the King, and that they desired to make use of him to ruin M. de Puisieux, and afterwards with greater facility to ruin him.”

“ I accordingly replied that I was unable to understand what necessity there was for the King to have a favourite, since he had dispensed with one so easily for eight months ; that his favourites ought to be his mother, his brother, his relatives and his good servants, wherein he would be following the example of the King his father, and that if some fatality inclined him to have one, the choice and the election ought to be left to him ; that I had never heard tell of any prince who took his favourites according to the decrees of his council ; but that, however that might be, it would not be I who would occupy that place, because I

did not deserve it ; because, also, the King would not wish to honour me with it, and because, finally, I would not accept it ; that I aspired to a moderate degree of favour, and a fortune of the same kind acquired by my virtue and by my merit, and which might be securely preserved ; that my lavish expenditure, and the little care I had taken up to the present to amass wealth, were sufficient proofs that I aspired rather to glory than to profit ; that I wished to seek a moderate and a secure fortune, and despised favour to such a degree that, if it were lying on the ground before me, I should not descend to stoop and pick it up ; and that such was my unalterable resolution, which did not allow me to take advantage of their good-will towards me, for which I rendered them very humble thanks."

As for their complaints about Puisieux, he said, it seemed to him that they were really complaining of the King and questioning his Majesty's right to confer privately with, and demand advice from, whichever of his Ministers he pleased. Puisieux was his [Bassompierre's] friend, and had always behaved as such, and, so long as he continued to do so, he declined to be a party to any intrigue against him.

Condé then warned Bassompierre that a time might come when he would regret having lost his friendship and that of his allies in order to preserve that of Puisieux ; to which Bassompierre replied that he would be "extraordinarily grieved to lose their good graces, but that the consolation would remain to him of not having lost them through any fault of his own, and that he would never purchase those of anyone at the price of his reputation."

That evening, Louis XIII decided to send a body of two hundred cavalry to scout in the direction of Montauban, and Valençay, who was lieutenant of Condé's company of gendarmes, asked to be allowed to go, and to take with him both his own men and *Monsieur le Prince's* company of light horse ; and to this the King consented. Condé was not at the council of war, and did

not learn of what had been done until later in the evening, when he was extremely angry and went to the King to complain that an affront had been put upon him by sending his two companies of horse away without his knowledge, and that he felt quite certain that it was Bassompierre who had suggested it. The King assured him that Bassompierre had had nothing to do with the affair, and that Valençay had himself asked for the commission, which he had given him, never imagining that *Monsieur le Prince* would take it ill. Condé, however, insisted that Bassompierre must have been at the bottom of it, and declared that he was hostile to him. When he had gone, the King sent for Bassompierre and told him of what the prince had said, upon which he deemed it advisable to inform his Majesty of the proposal which Condé had made him that morning in the chapel. "But," he says, "as it is very dangerous to be in the disfavour of a person of that rank who is your general, I begged the King very humbly either to reconcile us or to permit me to retire, since I did not wish to draw his hatred and his anger upon me."

This the King promised to do, and the next evening, when the army had encamped at Villemode, near Montauban, he came into the camp, and having praised Bassompierre for the arrangements which he had made, he turned to Condé and said: "Monsieur, yesterday you were angry with him without cause, and you can learn from Valençay whether Bassompierre was in any way responsible for his being sent away. I beg you, for love of me, to live on good terms with him, for I assure you he is your servant; and, if he were lost to this army, you know yourself whether it would be our fault." Condé promised to do as the King desired, and the same evening offered his apologies to Bassompierre, who begged him to regard him as his very humble servant, and that "when he happened to have any reason to be displeased with him, to do him the honour of telling him of it, and, if he did not give him

satisfaction in the matter, to be angry with him with all his soul, and not before."

On the following day—June 8—the army arrived before Négrépelisse, a little town on the left bank of the Aveyron. Louis XIII and his whole army were bitterly incensed against the inhabitants of Négrépelisse, who, one night during the previous winter, had revolted and massacred four hundred men of the Vaillac Regiment who had been placed in garrison there; while a report was current among the soldiers that, during the siege of Montauban, the sick and wounded of the Royal army who had been transported thither had been poisoned. However, as the town was believed to have returned to its allegiance, provided they admitted the King, there would not appear to have been any intention of punishing the inhabitants. But when the quartermaster who had been charged to select suitable quarters for his Majesty, approached the gates, he found them closed, and was received with a volley of musket-shots.

On learning of what had occurred, the King ordered Bassompierre, who was with the advance-guard, to invest the town, which he proceeded to do; but, on going forward to reconnoitre the place with Praslin and Chevreuse, he had a narrow escape of his life, being fired upon from a distance of twenty paces by a party of the enemy, whom he had mistaken for some of his own men.

"There was not in Négrépelisse," says Bassompierre, "anything better than a musket; no munitions of war save what each inhabitant might have had to go out shooting; no foreign soldier, no chief to command them; and the place, though it might have offered some resistance to a provincial force, was quite incapable of resisting a Royal army. Nevertheless, the inhabitants would neither consent to surrender nor even to parley."

The probable explanation is that the townsfolk were convinced that the King was bent upon their destruction, and that no terms which he might consent to give them

would be observed ; and that they had therefore determined to sell their lives for what they might be worth.

On the 9th, a battery of seven cannon was got into position close to the walls, and, although the enemy's musketry-fire was very effective, and caused many casualties amongst the gunners, by the following morning a considerable breach had been made. The besieged endeavoured to repair it by a barricade of carts, but this was of little avail, and the town was quickly taken by assault.

Louis XIII, infuriated by the obstinacy of the inhabitants, had given orders that they were to be treated as they had treated his soldiers some months before, and every man capable of bearing arms was put to the sword, with the exception of a few who succeeded in escaping into the château. The troops exceeded the pitiless orders of the King, and the majority of the women were violated and many murdered, together with their children ; while the town was pillaged and burned almost to the ground. The officers appear to have done their best to protect the women and to save the town ; but, as so often happened in those days when places were taken by assault, the soldiers were quite out of hand, and it was impossible to restrain them.¹ The château held out until the following

¹ Amongst those who honoured themselves by their efforts to protect the women was the Keeper of the Seals, De Vic. Here is the tribute of a contemporary chronicler :—

“ I will tell you on this matter an act of charity on the part of the Keeper of the Seals, who ordered one of his people, so soon as the town was taken, to ransom the girls and women whom he found in the hands of the soldiers, in order that by this means their honour and their lives might be saved. This he did of those whom he met, and brought them to the said Keeper of the Seals, to the number of fifteen. They were conducted to his lodging, as to a place of refuge and asylum ; and some were sent back under escort to the places from which they had fled to take refuge in Négrépelle on the approach of the Royal Army of his Majesty, while others were conducted to a place of safety.” *Le fidèle historien des affaires de France (Paris, MDCXXIII.)*.

The Duc de Chevreuse and Roger, valet of the King's wardrobe, also ransomed several women, and an officer named Pontis saved the honour of a young girl of eighteen.

day, when it surrendered at discretion, and twelve or fifteen of those found there were taken and hanged.

The reconciliation between Bassompierre and Condé was of very short duration, for, a day or two later, the prince accused him in a council of war of questioning the orders which were given him. Bassompierre retorted that he had a right to his opinion, and that "if his mouth were to be closed, he should retire from the Service. The King thereupon took his part, and was very angry with *Monsieur le Prince*." Further differences arose between them respecting the investment of Saint-Antonin, and, as Condé refused to be guided by his advice, Bassompierre begged to be permitted not to serve during the siege, and his request was granted.

Marillac was then appointed to the temporary command of Bassompierre's troops; but the officers of the Guards refused to take their orders from him, as did those of the Navarre Regiment. Condé was furious and, going to the King, accused Bassompierre of "making cabals and mutinies in his army," and said that he "deserved punishment and even death." And that gentleman happening to enter the royal presence a few moments later, he denounced him to his face. Bassompierre denied the charge, and said that the refusal of the officers of the Guards and of Navarre to serve under Marillac was not due to any action on his part, but to the poor opinion they entertained of Marillac's military capabilities, and that if some other officer were appointed, they would obey him readily enough. With this explanation Louis XIII professed himself satisfied, and *Monsieur le Prince* retired discomfited.

If we are to believe Bassompierre, Condé would appear to have bungled the siege of Saint-Antonin pretty badly, and an imprudent attempt to take the place by assault was repulsed with heavy loss. However, on June 22 the town surrendered.

A few days later, Bassompierre and the prince again

came into collision. Condé had proposed in the Council to attack Carmain, a nest of Huguenots which was a great annoyance to the people of Toulouse, who had petitioned that its reduction should be undertaken ; ¹ but Bassompierre objected that to conquer these small places was to waste time which might be more usefully employed in besieging important strongholds of the enemy like Nîmes and Montpellier. It was decided to follow his advice, whereat "*Monsieur le Prince's* bile was stirred against him," and he left the Council in anger, complaining loudly that Bassompierre had prevented Carmain from being invested. Some Huguenot gentlemen happening to overhear him, sent to inform the authorities of that town that the Royal army had no intention of laying siege to it, in consequence of which a body of 500 men who were on their way from Puylaurens to reinforce the garrison received orders to return. Bassompierre, who had been ordered to lead the army to Castelnau-dary, while the King and Condé went to visit Toulouse, learned of the return of this reinforcement, and aware that, deprived of its assistance, the people of Carmain would probably consider themselves incapable of withstanding a siege, determined to make an attempt to trick them into surrender. He accordingly appeared before the town, with all the paraphernalia for a siege : carts loaded with gabions, platforms for the batteries, and so forth, although he, of course, had no intention of undertaking it, since he had not received any orders to that effect, and, besides, had only two siege-guns with him. He then summoned it to surrender, vowing to make a terrible example of it in the event of a refusal, and to treat it as Négrépelisse had been treated ; and the inhabitants, completely deceived, offered to parley forthwith, and early on the following

¹ Carmain, called indifferently Caraman, Carmaing, Carman, or Cramail, had been a Huguenot town for nearly fifty years. The principal inconvenience which it caused the inhabitants of Toulouse was the fact that it afforded the few Protestants of the capital of Languedoc facilities for the public exercise of their religion.

morning, terms of capitulation having been arranged, the place surrendered (June 30).

The previous night part of the Piedmont Regiment, which Bassompierre had detached against the neighbouring town of Cuq-Toulza, had carried that place by assault, after blowing in the gate with a petard. So that within a few hours two towns had been taken, one of them without a blow being struck.

Not a little elated by this double success, Bassompierre placed the army in charge of Valençay, and repaired to Toulouse to report to the King.

“ I arrived,” says he, “ at the moment when the King was holding his council and was reprimanding *Monsieur le Prince*, because, when the Parlement and aldermen of Toulouse had come to do him homage, *Monsieur le Prince* had said that the cowardice of M. de Bassompierre had prevented the King from attacking Carmain, as, though he had counselled him to do it, I had dissuaded him. When the King was informed that I was at the door, he wondered what could have caused me to quit the army ; but, when he ordered me to be admitted, I told him that I wished to bring him myself the news of the capture of Carmain and Cuq and to receive his commands upon other matters which I wished to propose to him. Then *Monsieur le Prince* rose and came to embrace me, telling me that he had done wrong to say what he had said, and that he would repair it by saying much good of me. . . . It is impossible to describe the joy with which the people of Toulouse received the news of this capture. They caused a splendid lodging to be made ready for me ; and the aldermen came to thank me, and to invite me to dine on the morrow at the Hôtel-de-Ville, where they would hold a grand assembly for love of me, and a ball to follow. But I begged them to excuse me, on the ground that it was necessary for me to return promptly to the army.”

Bassompierre returned to the army accompanied by Praslin, who took over the command. The following day he met with what might have been a very severe accident, his horse stumbling and falling into a ditch on top of him.

However, he escaped with nothing worse than a badly bruised foot. On July 2, the army reached Castelnaudary, having snapped up the little town of Le Mas-Saintes-Puelles on the way, and on the 5th the King joined it. His Majesty was unwell, suffering, says his physician Hérouard, from "sore throat, a cold, and a relaxed uvula," and he remained for some days at Castelnaudary and kept Bassompierre with him; while the army under Praslin continued its march into Lower Languedoc.

Meantime, Lesdiguières, to whom, after the death of Luynes, Louis XIII had promised the office of Constable, provided he would renounce the Reformed faith, had sent to inform the King that he was about to be received into the Catholic Church. His elevation would entail a vacancy among the marshals, and the King sent for Bassompierre and Schomberg, who had also remained at Castelnaudary, and told them that, so soon as another occurred, he would create them both marshals, but that he did not wish to promote one before the other, as he considered that their claims were equal. Schomberg, however, pressed the King to promote both Bassompierre and himself forthwith, pointing out that they could render him more useful service as marshals of France in the approaching campaign in Lower Languedoc, and that when there was another vacancy, his Majesty could leave it unfilled, which would come to the same thing.

Perceiving that the King seemed very reluctant to take this course, though, at the same time, he was unwilling to refuse so pressing a request, Bassompierre, like a true courtier, came to his aid, and declared that, as he had "always preferred to deserve great honours than to possess them," he was not so eager for the bâton as Schomberg, and would "without envy or regret" resign his claims in favour of one who was six years his senior, and one of his Majesty's Ministers, and therefore entitled to the preference. "M. de Schomberg,"

says he, "feeling that my courtesy had placed him under a great obligation, thanked me very gracefully ; but the King persisted in refusing to promote one of us without the other ; and so we withdrew."

On July 13, Louis XIII left Castelnau-dary and proceeded, by way of Carcassonne and Narbonne, to Béziers, where he remained for some little time. Bassompierre, however, rejoined the army, which was advancing slowly towards Montpellier, and which, on August 2, laid siege simultaneously to the towns of Lunel and Marsillargues, situated about a league from one another. Marsillargues surrendered almost at once, and Lunel a few days later, the garrison of the latter place, by the terms of the capitulation, being permitted to march out with their swords only ; their other weapons were to be placed in the carts which carried their baggage.

Bassompierre had received orders to enter the town with the Guards the moment the garrison evacuated it. On his way thither, he saw great numbers of disbanded soldiers of different regiments, *landsknechts* and Swiss as well as French, lingering about, and felt sure that their presence boded no good, and that they were meditating an attack upon the baggage. He accordingly decided not to allow the garrison to leave until he had ridden back to the Royal camp to warn Praslin, whom he advised to take measures to prevent any such attempt. But the marshal replied that "he was not a child, and that he understood his business, and that if he [Bassompierre] would only give the necessary orders within the town, he would do the same without."

Bassompierre returned to the town and directed the garrison to march out with their baggage, after which he entered with his troops, and gave orders that the gates should be closed and the breach which the besiegers' cannon had made strongly guarded, as he thought it not improbable that an attempt might be made to enter and pillage the place.

"There was some degree of order in the departure of the enemy," he says, "until the baggage came in sight; but, when that appeared, all the disbanded soldiers of our army rushed upon it, before it was possible for the marshal or Portes or Marillac to prevent them, and plundered these poor soldiers, 400 of whom they inhumanly butchered."

Bassompierre, however, had the satisfaction of executing rigorous justice upon some of these ruffians:—

"Eight soldiers, of different countries and regiments, presented themselves at the gates of Lunel, with more than twenty prisoners, whom they brought tied together, with the intention of entering the town. Their swords were stained with the blood of those whom they had massacred, and they were so laden with booty that they could hardly walk. Finding the gate of Lunel shut, they called to the sentries to go and tell me to give orders for them to be let in. I went to the gate in consequence of what I heard, which I found to be true. I let them in and then ordered these eight fine fellows to be bound with the same cords with which they had bound the twenty prisoners. After giving these men the booty of the eight soldiers, whom, without any form of trial, I caused to be hanged before their eyes on a tree near the bridge of Lunel, I had them escorted by my carabiniers so far as the road to Cauvission. On the morrow, *Monsieur le Prince* was very pleased with what I had done and thanked me."

Two or three days after the Royal troops had taken possession of Lunel, the town narrowly escaped being destroyed, with everyone within its walls.

Bassompierre was at dinner with Créquy, Schomberg, and the Duc de Montmorency when there was a violent explosion, which partially wrecked the room in which they sat, though, happily, they were unhurt. They ran out to ascertain the cause, and learned that one of a train of ammunition-waggons which was entering the town had caught fire, and that the flames had reached the powder, with the result that several houses had been destroyed and others were blazing furiously. The utmost consternation prevailed, for the explosion had

occurred near the gate by which the waggons had entered, and the débris of the houses barred the approach to it, while the other gates had been blocked up by Condé's orders ; and the fire was rapidly approaching a convent, in the vaults of which a great quantity of powder was stored. If once it reached it, the whole town would be consumed, with all the troops and inhabitants.

“ The confusion was extreme,” says Bassompierre, “ and, as everyone was thinking only of himself and his own safety, no one ran to extinguish the fire ; all the people sought only to get out of the town, but no one could find a way. At length, I caused one of the blocked-up gates to be broken open, through which everyone could get out, and, having by this expedient got more elbow-room, we removed our powder to a safe place and extinguished the fire, by which more than fifty persons had perished.”

The following day Bassompierre went with a body of 500 cavalry to Villeneuve-de-Maguelonne to escort the King to Lunel, where his Majesty arrived on August 15. On the 17th, Louis XIII went to visit Sommières, which had just surrendered to his troops, and on the return journey Schomberg, whose jealousy of Bassompierre was increasing daily, finding an opportunity for private conversation with his sovereign, did not fail to turn it to account :

“ On the road M. de Schomberg said to the King that I was his enemy, and he begged him to believe nothing that I might say about him. The King replied that he was entirely wrong, and that I had never spoken of him except to his advantage, nor of any other person, and that Schomberg knew me very little to take me for a man who did ill turns to people. He [Schomberg] was not a little astonished by this answer.”

Perceiving by Bassompierre's manner that the King had told him of their conversation, Schomberg requested Puisieux to effect a reconciliation between them, to which

Bassompierre "consented reluctantly and after he had expressed to him his sentiments."

Schomberg would appear to have possessed an unusual amount of assurance, even for a German, for, immediately afterwards, he begged the man whom he had attempted to injure to employ his good offices with the King to obtain for him the governments which d'Épernon was about to resign in order to accept that of Guienne. This cool request, however, proved a little too much for Bassompierre, whose friend Praslin also aspired to these offices ; and he replied that, not only should he refuse to speak in his favour, but should oppose him, until Praslin had been provided for. Eventually d'Épernon's governments were divided between the two, Praslin receiving Sain-tonge and Aulnis, and Schomberg the Angoumois and the Limousin.

On August 27, Louis XIII arrived at Laverune, a little to the west of Montpellier, and on the following day Lesdiguières, who had been received into the Catholic Church in the Cathedral of Grenoble on the 24th, took the oath as Constable of France ; after which, to the great mortification of Schomberg, the King informed Bassompierre that it was his intention to confer the vacant marshal's bâton upon him, and that he would give orders for the necessary patent to be made out forthwith. His Majesty's decision to give it to Bassompierre, notwithstanding what he had told him and Schomberg a fortnight before, was no doubt due to the fact that he had just bestowed a lucrative government upon the latter and considered that he ought to be content for the present with that proof of the royal favour. However, M. de Schomberg, who was one of those whose appetite for honours and emoluments seems only to have been stimulated by attempts to satisfy it, did not view the matter in that light, and felt deeply aggrieved.

CHAPTER XXIX

Conditions of peace with the Huguenots decided upon—Refusal of the citizens of Montpellier to open their gates to the King until his army has been disbanded—Bullion advises Louis XIII to accede to their wishes, and is supported by the majority of the Council—Bassompierre is of the contrary opinion, and urges the King to reduce Montpellier to “entire submission and repentance”—Louis XIII decides to follow the advice of Bassompierre, and the siege of the town is begun—A disastrous day for the Royal army—Death of Zamet and the Italian engineer Gamorini—Political intrigues—Bassompierre succeeds in securing the post of Keeper of the Seals for Caumontin, although the King has already promised it to d'Aligre, the nominee of Condé—Heavy losses sustained by the besiegers in an attack upon one of the advanced-works—Condé quits the army and sets out for Italy—Bassompierre is created marshal of France amidst general acclamations—Peace is signed—Death of the Abbé Roucellai—Bassompierre accompanies the King to Avignon, where he again falls of petechial fever, but recovers—He assists at the entry of the King and Queen into Lyons—He is offered the government of the Maine, but declines it.

THE Royal army had now invested Montpellier, which Rohan was determined to defend to the last extremity, if he were unable to obtain a treaty for the whole body of his co-religionists ; but it seemed as though peace would intervene to prevent further bloodshed. The Huguenots had abated many of their pretensions, and Louis XIII, on his side, was not disposed to press too hardly upon them. Affairs without were becoming more and more alarming ; and if the Ultramontane party, blinded by religious hatred, desired to continue the war until the Protestants were entirely crushed, level-headed men saw with grief France rendered impotent abroad and a prey to civil strife to satisfy the bigotry of fanatics and the egoistic ambition of the Prince de Condé. Lesdiguières, who desired to terminate his career by the deliverance of Italy, resumed his negotiations with Rohan, and in an interview between them at Saint-Privat conditions of

peace were decided upon. The King was prepared to sign the articles and to make his entry into Montpellier ; but the inhabitants firmly refused to open their gates to him. If, said they, the King would withdraw with his army to a distance of ten leagues, they would admit the Constable with what forces he wished to enter, and a week hence, when his army had been disbanded, they would receive his Majesty with all possible magnificence.

“ The fact was,” writes Bassompierre, “ that *Monsieur le Prince*, mortal enemy of the peace which was being negotiated, had said on several occasions that, if the King entered Montpellier, he would cause the town to be pillaged, whatever precautions might be taken to prevent it. This had so alarmed the people of Montpellier that they preferred to have recourse to any other extremity than that of receiving the King ; and, as their final answer, which they gave that day to M. de Bullion,¹ they offered all obedience, provided the King did not enter their town, of which they considered the pillage assured, if they opened their gates to him.”

Louis XIII at once summoned the council to consider the answer which Bullion had brought back, and after the latter had read it to those present, called upon him to give his opinion.

Bullion, who seems to have been a man of sound common-sense and had been a witness that morning of the genuine alarm with which the extravagant boasts of Condé had inspired the people of Montpellier, strongly urged the King to humour them and “ to seek solid advantages, without allowing himself to be stopped by little formalities which are not essential.” “ If,” said he, “ the town of Montpellier were refusing you the obedience and submission which is your due, I should say that it is necessary to destroy and exterminate it. But it is a people alarmed

¹ Claude de Bullion, Seigneur de Bonnelles. He was successively counsellor to the Parlement of Paris, Counsellor of State, and *maître des requêtes* and was appointed Surintendant of Finance in 1632. He died in 1646.

and terrified by the threats which have been launched against them to plunder and destroy them, to violate their wives and daughters and to burn their houses, who entreats you in the name of God to receive its obedience through your Constable, who will enter, when you have withdrawn, with such forces as he pleases, to make your Majesty's authority recognised there, which is the same thing as though you entered yourself. Why do you wish for a mere punctilio to refuse a peace so useful and honourable for your Majesty ; and prefer to undertake a long war, of which the issue is doubtful and the expense excessive, in a country where the heat is immoderate, and to expose your own person to the injuries of war and of the season, when you can escape them without loss or blame ? ”

The King was visibly impressed by this excellent advice, and when Condé sprang to his feet and began angrily declaiming against Bullion and “ the cabal which had forged this peace without the knowledge of the Council and were endeavouring to conclude it with disgrace and infamy,” he sternly bade him resume his seat, saying that he would have an opportunity of giving his opinion when his turn came.

Not improbably influenced by the attitude of the King, counsellor after counsellor rose and expressed his approval of the advice given by Bullion. When Bassompierre was called upon, Condé exclaimed impatiently : “ I know his opinion already, and we can say of it *ad idem*.” To the general astonishment, however, Bassompierre was for once in accord with Condé, and advised the King to break off the negotiations forthwith and “ show, by a noble and generous disdain, how deeply he was offended by the propositions of those of Montpellier.” “ If,” said he, “ your Majesty were before Strasbourg, Antwerp, or Milan, and were concluding a peace with the princes to which those towns belong, the stipulation that you should not enter them would be

tolerable ; but that a King of France, victorious and supported by a powerful army, in place of granting peace to a handful of his rebel subjects, without resource and reduced to extremity, should receive it from them on the disgraceful conditions which they have just proposed, is a proposition so insulting that it cannot be suffered nor even listened to The King who accepts those conditions must be prepared to receive terrible insults from the other towns, who will be rendered audacious by this example and assured of impunity by this unworthy toleration. . . . Sire, in the name of God, take a firm resolution and persevere in it, and insist even upon the ruin of this people, because it is rebellious, and because it is also insolent and impudent ; or to reduce it to entire submission and complete repentance."

He then pointed out that his own interests were opposed to the advice which he was offering the King, and that he was actuated entirely by regard for his Majesty's service and honour, since he had already been promised the marshal's bâton and had nothing to gain at the siege of Montpellier, " save much toil, dangerous wounds and perhaps even death." It was also possible that unfortunate accidents might arise which might oblige the King to defer his promotion to the office of marshal or even compel him [Bassompierre] to refuse the honour. " Nevertheless," he concluded, " I shall take these risks, and I beg your Majesty very humbly to delay my reception [as marshal] until the town of Montpellier shall be reduced to its obedience, and your Majesty avenged of the affront which these rebels have desired to inflict upon you."

" When I had finished speaking," says Bassompierre, " *Monsieur le Prince*, who had listened to me attentively, rose and said to the King : ' Sire, here is an honest man, devoted servant of your Majesty, and jealous of your honour.' The King rose also, which obliged all the others to rise, and his Majesty said to M. de Bullion :

'Return to Montpellier and tell the people of the town that I grant conditions to my subjects, but that I do not receive them from them. Let them accept those which I have offered them or let them prepare to be forced to do so.' And thus the council ended. *Monsieur le Prince* did me the honour to approach and embrace me and to say aloud so many kind things of me that I was covered with confusion."

There can be no doubt that Bassompierre, who was an honest man and a devoted servant of the Crown, was actuated by what he considered to be his duty in tendering this advice to his sovereign, which had touched Louis XIII on his weakest spot—his exaggerated regard for his own dignity. But it is equally certain that he had committed a disastrous mistake, both from a political and military point of view, in counselling the King to sacrifice the interests of his realm for what Bullion had rightly described as "a mere punctilio." For, not only was an immediate peace of the most vital importance to the interests of France, both at home and abroad, but the reduction of the people of Montpellier to "entire submission and complete repentance" was a task which, in the most favourable circumstances, could not be effected except at immense expense and at the cost of hundreds of valuable lives. It is indeed amazing that, after the terrible lesson of Montauban, anyone could have been so rash as to embark upon another great siege for reasons so inadequate.

The siege began in anything but an auspicious manner. In the early hours of September 2, Bassompierre and Praslin advanced against the ridge of Saint-Denis, where the citadel now stands, and carried it without any resistance, since there was only a guard-house there, the occupants of which fled at their approach. Leaving Valençay there with some 1,500 men to hold it, they returned to camp, and, after attending a meeting of the

Council, Bassompierre, who had to be up all the following night to superintend the opening of the trenches, went to his tent to snatch a few hours' sleep. About midday, he was awakened by the sound of heavy firing, and, hurrying out, he saw the troops whom he and Praslin had left on the ridge of Saint-Denis in disorderly retreat, hotly pursued by the enemy.

It appears that Valençay, believing that there was no possibility of his being attacked in broad daylight, had not only neglected to entrench himself, but had even allowed his men to pile arms and scatter about the ridge ; and, to crown all, had permitted a trumpeter from the town, who had been sent to demand the bodies of the dead, to approach without taking the precaution to order his eyes to be bandaged. On his return to Montpellier, this man duly reported what he had seen to his officers ; and the garrison, sallying out in considerable force, fell upon the astonished Valençay and utterly routed him.

Springing on a horse, Bassompierre galloped off to the quarters of the Swiss Guards, who were the troops nearest the ridge of Saint-Denis, called them to arms and led them against the enemy. Meantime, the Duc de Montmorency, the young Duc de Fronsac and other nobles and gentlemen, who happened to be in attendance on the King, who had just finished dinner, had mounted the first horses they could find, and, with more valour than discretion, thrown themselves into the *mélée*, in a vain endeavour to rally the fugitives. Montmorency's life was saved by d'Argencourt, the lieutenant-governor of Montpellier, who fortunately recognised him, and he escaped with a couple of not very serious wounds ; but his companions perished almost to a man, amongst them being Fronsac, whom Bassompierre describes as " a young prince of great promise, who, in his opinion, would have been one day a great captain," the Marquis de Beuvron, d'Auctot, who commanded Condé's company of light horse and was a great favourite of the prince, and Luynes's

nephew Combalet, brother of the young lady whom Bassompierre would in all probability have married, had the late Constable lived a few months longer.¹

However, Bassompierre had now brought up the Swiss, and before the advance of these veterans, the enemy, who had pursued the routed troops almost to the confines of the Royal camp, fell back into the town, and the ridge of Saint-Denis was recovered. But it had been a most disastrous day for the besiegers, for Valençay's force had been terribly cut up and his best officers killed.

Next day, the defenders of Montpellier, encouraged by this success, made a determined attack on Montmorency's troops, encamped to the west of the town, who gave way before them. Zamet,² who had taken over the command from the wounded duke, succeeded in rallying them and driving the enemy back. But almost immediately afterwards he was mortally wounded by a cannon-shot from the town, and died a few days later.

The trenches were opened without any further disasters, but very little progress was made, for the enemy stubbornly disputed every yard of ground. The Italian engineer Gamorini was killed on the 11th, and his death was a severe loss to the besiegers. The same night the defenders made a fierce sortie, which was not repulsed until the work of several days had been destroyed. During the fighting a captain of the Navarre Regiment named Des Champs was surrounded by the enemy and would have been killed, had he not cried out: "I am Bassompierre; I am worth 20,000 crowns to you!" Upon which they spared his life and made him prisoner, thinking that they had secured a valuable prize.

In the night of the 13th-14th, the besiegers attacked the advanced-works on the north side of the town in three places simultaneously, and carried them. This placed

¹ Combalet had recently married Marie Madeleine de Vignerot, afterwards Duchesse d'Aiguillon, Richelieu's favourite niece.

² He was a son of Zamet the financier, and colonel of the Picardy Regiment.

them in a favourable position for bringing their cannon to bear upon the main fortifications ; but, on the advice of a young engineer named La Magne Chavannes, and notwithstanding the opposition of Bassompierre and other officers, Condé insisted that they should first concentrate their efforts against a ravelin situated between the two bastions. The task of approaching this work proved a most difficult one, as they were exposed to a heavy flanking fire from the town which repeatedly levelled their traverses, and to bombing-attacks, which did considerable execution ; while one night the trenches were completely flooded by a violent storm.

Meantime, the generals were devoting what time they could spare from their military duties to political intrigue. The Cardinal de Retz had died at the end of August, and the Keeper of the Seals, De Vic, in the first days of September, and their deaths had greatly weakened Condé's party. He and Schomberg succeeded in replacing the former in the Council by their friend the Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld, and thus contrived to exclude Richelieu, though they could not prevent him being recommended for the vacant cardinal's hat, which was immediately solicited for him by the Queen-Mother. Condé then pressed the King to confer the post of Keeper of the Seals upon d'Aligre, a Counsellor of State who was devoted to his interests, and would appear to have extracted a promise from his Majesty that he should be appointed. At any rate, when retiring to rest on the night of September 21, the King had told the courtiers who were present that it was his intention to make d'Aligre Keeper of the Seals, and they had informed Condé.

Next morning, flushed with success and convinced that he was on the point of triumphing over his enemies and dominating both the King and the State, Condé sent Roucellai to Bassompierre with what amounted to an ultimatum. As Bassompierre was entering the King's quarters, with Praslin, to attend a meeting of the Council,

the abbé drew him aside and informed him that he had a communication of great importance to make to him on behalf of *Monsieur le Prince*, and that he desired to speak before Praslin.

After assuring Bassompierre that he was deeply sensible of the obligations under which he had placed him,¹ and that, in return, he had done everything in his power to secure for him the good will of Condé, Roucellaï declared that, despite all his efforts and those of his friends, *Monsieur le Prince* was as ill-satisfied with him as he could well be, and was convinced that, not only did he prefer Puisieux's friendship to his, but had actually assisted that Minister to prejudice his Majesty's mind against him. He had therefore charged him to offer Bassompierre once more his entire friendship, provided that he were willing to abandon that of Puisieux ; and he required an answer that very day, as he declined to wait any longer. And the abbé entreated him to accept his patron's offer and so escape the disastrous consequences which would inevitably follow a refusal.

"M. d'Aligre," said he, "will be to-morrow Keeper of the Seals, and he and M. de Schomberg, closely united with *Monsieur le Prince*, will not only ruin M. de Puisieux, but also all his abettors and adherents, of whom you are the chief. I wished to tell you this before the Maréchal de Praslin, who loves you as a father, and who will be my witness that I have striven to avert from your head the storm which I perceive ready to burst upon it. For assuredly these three persons united together will possess the State, and will exalt or abase whomsoever they please."

"As he concluded these words," says Bassompierre, "the King called me, and since he saw me looking thoughtful, he inquired of what I was dreaming. 'I am dreaming, Sire,' I answered, 'of an extravagant harangue which Roucellaï has just made me, before M. de Praslin, on

¹ Bassompierre had protected Roucellaï after the death of Concini, whose protégé he had been, and had lately obtained for him a rich abbey.

behalf of *Monsieur le Prince*, which has astonished me both on my own account and yours. He declares me incapable of ever possessing his good graces if I do not accept them in the course of to-day, on condition of abandoning the friendship of M. de Puisieux, and says further that he, Schomberg and d'Aligre (who is to-morrow to become Keeper of the Seals) will be three heads in one hood, who will govern the State according to their whim, and, without any contradiction, ruining or aggrandizing their enemies or their partisans or servants at their pleasure. Judge, Sire, the condition to which you and those who desire to depend only upon you will be reduced !'

"It was unnecessary to say any more to the King to exasperate him. 'They are not where they think they are,' he replied, 'and I have a rod in pickle for them.' I begged him not to detain me longer, lest Roucellaï should believe that I had told him of his harangue, and, without appearing to notice anything, to ask the Maréchal de Praslin whether he had not said this, and more."

Bassompierre then went back to Roucellaï and told him that "neither threats nor disgrace were able to make him abandon his friends, but, on the contrary, served only to bind him more closely to them," and that "though he should always be *Monsieur le Prince's* very humble servant, he would never do anything unworthy of himself to acquire his good graces."

Meantime, Praslin had confirmed what Bassompierre had told the King and contrived to anger him still more against Condé and Schomberg; and his Majesty told Bassompierre that he would discuss the matter with him after dinner, when he would decide what must be done.

When the Council rose, Puisieux came up to Bassompierre and said: "The matter is decided; d'Aligre is Keeper of the Seals." Bassompierre replied that he would believe it when he saw it; and that, meantime, he did not intend to worry about the matter. The Minister, however, declined to be comforted and went away, looking very disconsolate. Louis XIII then spoke to Bassompierre, and told him that he feared that he would be

obliged to make d'Aligre Keeper of the Seals, as there was no one else who possessed all the necessary qualifications for so important a post. Bassompierre replied that his Majesty was doing an injustice to Caumartin, one of the oldest Counsellors of State, who had been entrusted in his time with several embassies and other important commissions, of which he had acquitted himself with credit. The King objected that Caumartin stammered, as he did himself, and that, as it was one of the duties of the Keeper of the Seals to prompt his sovereign when he was making a speech, this would entail serious inconvenience. "The man who ought to assist me when I am speaking," said he, "will require someone to speak for him!"

However, Bassompierre waited in the King's chamber until his Majesty returned from dinner, when, finding that he was much incensed at Condé's presumption, he skilfully fanned the flame and then again proposed Caumartin to him, pointing out that, if at the end of three months the King found that he was incapable of discharging the duties of his post to his satisfaction, he could call for his resignation.

After some hesitation, the King told him that he had decided to give the Seals to Caumartin, and would inform him of it when he came to the Council on the following morning, but until then he should say nothing about the matter to anyone. The battle, however, was not yet won, for Louis was so easily influenced that if Condé were to see him in the interval, he would probably have no more difficulty in persuading him to break the promise he had just given Bassompierre than Bassompierre had had to induce him to break the promise he had given Condé. Aware of this, Bassompierre determined to get his Majesty to commit himself in writing, and demanded permission "to send a note on his behalf to console by this good news M. de Puisieux, who had gone to his lodging stricken to the heart." To this the King consented, provided that Puisieux should be enjoined to keep the affair secret; and

Bassompierre, taking Louis's *escritoire*, which was on the table, wrote the letter and then begged the King to add a few words in his own hand. And his Majesty wrote at the foot : "I confirm this note."

In order to get the King to commit himself still further, Bassompierre then asked if he would permit him to write to Caumartin, to which Louis, after making some little difficulty, also consented.

It was well that Bassompierre had taken these precautions, for, next morning, Condé, having learned what was in the wind, came to the King to inquire whether there were any truth in a report that had reached him that his Majesty intended to make Caumartin Keeper of the Seals. Louis, greatly embarrassed, assured him that it was without foundation, and he returned the same answer to several other persons whom the prince had put up to question him on the matter. It is probable, indeed, that had he not been persuaded to commit himself in regard to Caumartin, Condé's candidate would, after all, have got the Seals. As it was, he had gone too far to draw back, and, to the intense mortification of *Monsieur le Prince*, he that afternoon gave them to Caumartin.

The appointment of Caumartin in place of his own nominee, notwithstanding the promise which Louis XIII had given him, was a serious rebuff to the presumptuous Condé, nor did he succeed any better in his military than in his political operations. On October 2, against the advice of Bassompierre, he gave orders that an attempt should be made to carry the ravelin by assault. It failed, and the besieged retaliated by a furious sortie on the flank of the Royal troops, which one of the latter's own mines had laid open, and compelled them to abandon their trenches. Through the united efforts of Bassompierre¹

¹ "The Sieur de Bassompierre, since made Maréchal de France for his merits, ran thither, sword in hand, with some soldiers of the Piedmont Regiment. . . . In the midst of the disorder into which our men had been thrown, the Maréchal de Bassompierre showed his judgment and his courage."—*Histoire du Maréchal de Toiras*.

and d'Épernon, the enemy were driven back, but the losses had been heavy, and included a number of officers. Montpellier was threatening to become a second Montauban.

A few days later, Lesdiguières, who had returned to his government of Dauphiné before the siege began, arrived in the Royal camp, at the head of considerable reinforcements. The Constable came ostensibly to take command of the operations, but his real object was to resume his negotiations for peace, which Louis XIII had, unknown to Condé, authorised him to do. The prince, deprived of his command and perceiving that peace was about to be concluded, despite all his efforts to prevent it, comprehended that his favour was at an end, and, in high dudgeon, quitted the army and set out for Italy, on the pretext of acquitting himself of a vow which he made during his imprisonment to perform a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Loretto.

The following morning (October 14), the terms of peace having been agreed upon, Rohan was permitted to pass through the camp and enter Montpellier, in order to persuade the citizens to accept the conditions, which included the admission of a Royal garrison into the town.

On the morning of the 12th, Bassompierre came to the King's quarters to attend a meeting of the Council. It seemed to him that the King, who was in his aviary, did not look at him as kindly as usual, nor did he address him. Presently, his Majesty requested the members of the Council to follow him into his chamber, and told the Cardinal de la Vallette and Chevreuse, d'Elbeuf and Vendôme, who had come to pay him their respects, that he desired their presence also.

"As we entered," says Bassompierre, "the Keeper of the Seals said to me: 'It was my intention to recognise the obligations under which you have placed me, by sending you your letters perfumed, but the King pressed me so much to seal them, through Beautré, whom he

sent to me yesterday evening, that I had not the time.' 'What letters?' I asked. 'Those creating you marshal of France, whose oath you are about to take.' I was very astonished and rejoiced likewise at this unexpected news, and, at the same time, the King spoke these very words:—

" ' Messieurs, it is my intention to recognise the good and great services which M. de Bassompierre has rendered me for several years, both in the wars which I have waged and on other occasions, by the office of marshal of France, believing that he will serve me worthily and usefully therein. I desire to have your opinions on this matter, to see whether they are in conformity with my own.'

" Then all, with one voice, did me the honour to say more good of me than I deserved; upon which, without saying anything further to me, he [the King] took me by the hand, and being seated in his chair, made me kneel and take the oath. Then he placed in my hand the bâton, for which I rendered him the most humble thanks that I could think of. All present advanced to embrace and to felicitate me; and next every corps in the army, both of the infantry and the cavalry, came to offer very humble thanks to the King for the choice that he had made of my person, their first brigadier-general, to make him a marshal of France. And those of the artillery having demanded permission to fire a salvo of all the cannon in the army, the infantry did the same, to make a salvo of rejoicing. And the Sieur de Calonges, governor of Montpellier, sent to inquire of our soldiers in the trenches why this salvo was being fired, and, on being acquainted with the reason, he gave orders that the people of Montpellier should do the same as the army; and there also a general salvo was fired."

It was a fitting tribute to a very brave man and a most capable officer, who had most thoroughly earned the high honour which had just been conferred upon him.

The same night the authorities of Montpellier sent to inform Louis XIII of their acceptance of the terms of peace, and on the 18th the ratification was brought to the King. The King signed the edict which put an end to this miserable war which had cost France so dear on the

following day,¹ and Créquy and Bassompierre with the French and Swiss Guards took possession of the town. His Majesty made his entry on the 20th, and “ all was as peaceable as if there had never been a war.”

On the 22nd, Roucellai, who had been very ill for some days with petechial fever, sent an earnest request for Bassompierre to come to him. He went and found the unfortunate abbé almost at his last gasp, and he had only just time to confide his papers to Bassompierre, with directions to burn all those which he thought advisable, than he died. As Roucellai had been one of the most inveterate intriguers of his time, these papers must have furnished interesting reading, and have contained the wherewithal to set the whole Court by the ears. It was just as well, therefore, that Bassompierre had authority to destroy them.

On the 27th, Louis XIII left Montpellier and two or three days later made his entry into Arles, “ where for the first time,” says Bassompierre, “ I marched in my quality of marshal of France, immediately before the King, on the left of the Maréchal de Praslin.”

¹ The Treaty of Montpellier confirmed the Edict of Nantes, and permitted the Protestants to hold ecclesiastical assemblies without the authorisation of the King ; but political assemblies were forbidden, unless the King’s permission had been obtained. La Rochelle and Montauban were allowed to retain their fortifications, and it was promised that Fort Saint-Louis, which the Government had caused to be erected within a quarter of a league of the ramparts of La Rochelle, and which was a serious menace to that town, should be razed. But the fortifications of the other Huguenot towns were to be partially dismantled, so that they might never again be capable of defying the royal authority. The chiefs of the insurrection were restored to all their honours and charges, with the exception of those whom the King preferred to indemnify. Among these was Rohan, who exchanged his government of Poitou for that of the towns of Nîmes, Uzès, and Castries, which, however, he was not allowed to garrison, a large sum of money and a pension of 45,000 livres. La Force had already been indemnified for the loss of his government of Béarn.

The Protestants’ imprudent recourse to arms had thus cost them dear. They had lost two important governments, their political organisation and all their places of surety, with the exception of La Rochelle and Montauban. It only remained to deprive them of these two towns to reduce the party to a mere sect. In the position in which they were, however, it was as favourable a treaty as they could have hoped for.

From Arles Bassompierre was despatched with the greater part of the army to reduce some small places from which the Sieur de Brison, a Huguenot chief who had refused to make his submission, was pillaging the surrounding country. This he successfully accomplished, and towards the middle of November rejoined the King at Lyons. On the way thither he spent a night at Valence, "where he found M. de Lusson (*sic*), who had been nominated cardinal and was on his way to receive the hat from the King."¹ From Lyons he accompanied Louis XIII to Avignon, where the King received a visit from Charles Emmanuel of Savoy, who came to lay the basis of a treaty between France, Savoy and Venice, which was signed at Paris on February 7 of the following year, and which had for its object to compel Spain to execute the Treaty of Madrid and to restore the Valtellina to the Grisons.

On the day following the Duke of Savoy's arrival, the marshal was taken ill while attending a play given in honour of the King at the Jesuit College. His illness developed into another attack of petechial fever, though happily not in so severe a form as the one he had had after the siege of Montauban. However, it kept him at Avignon for a fortnight and prevented him from accompanying the King to Grenoble, though he was well enough to assist at their Majesties' entry into Lyons, which took place on December 12 and would appear to have rivalled in magnificence that of Henri II and Catherine de' Medici into the same city in 1548, though on this occasion there was no Diane de Poitiers present to dispute the honours with the Queen of France and give piquancy to the ceremony.

The entry was followed by a week of balls, banquets,

¹ After long negotiations, Richelieu had at last obtained his promotion to the cardinalate on September 23 of that year. He was on his way at this moment, not to receive the hat, but to offer his thanks to the King. Hérouard tells us that the hat was given Richelieu by Louis XIII, at Lyons, on December 10, 1622.

theatrical performances, and displays of fireworks, all of which festivities were no doubt much appreciated by the marshal after so many months of war's alarms, capped by a severe illness, and all the more, since, he tells us, in the course of them he was reconciled to a fair lady—her name is not recorded—from whom he had had the misfortune to be estranged.

Louis XIII left Lyons to return to Paris on December 19. At *La Charité*, where he spent Christmas, news arrived of the death of the Prince de Guéméné, governor of the Maine, and the King offered the vacant office to Bassompierre. The marshal, however, declined it, on the ground that he desired "to receive his [the King's] favours and benefits at such intervals that the King should be praised for his kindness and he himself for his modesty, and that, as only two months had elapsed since he had honoured him with the office of marshal of France, if he were to make him so soon governor of a province, people would talk about it." We are, however, inclined to think that the real reason of his refusal was his disinclination to leave the Court—for the governor of a province was obliged to reside there for several months in each year—partly owing to the attraction which court life had for him, and partly because he knew that to retain the favour of a king like Louis XIII it was necessary to be with him constantly.

CHAPTER XXX

Fall of Schomberg—La Vieuville becomes *Surintendant des Finances*—

His bitter jealousy of Bassompierre—He informs Louis XIII that the marshal “deserves the Bastille or worse”—Semi-disgrace of Bassompierre, who, however, succeeds in making his peace with the King—Mismanagement of public affairs by Puisieux and his father, the Chancellor Brulart de Sillery—La Vieuville and Richelieu intrigue against them and procure their dismissal from office—The Earl of Holland arrives in Paris to sound the French Court on the question of a marriage between the Prince of Wales and Henrietta Maria—Bassompierre takes part in a grand ballet at the Louvre—La Vieuville accuses the marshal of drawing more money for the Swiss than he is entitled to—Foreign policy of La Vieuville—Richelieu re-enters the Council—Bassompierre accused by La Vieuville of being a pensioner of Spain—Serious situation of the marshal—The Connétable Lesdiguières advises Bassompierre to leave France, but the latter decides to remain—Differences between La Vieuville and Richelieu over the negotiations for the English marriage—Arrogance and presumption of La Vieuville—Intrigues of Richelieu against him—The King informs Bassompierre that he has decided to disgrace La Vieuville—Indiscretion of the marshal—Duplicity of Louis XIII towards his Minister—Fall of La Vieuville—Richelieu becomes the virtual head of the Council.

IN the second week in January, 1623, the Court reached Paris, and Louis XIII made “a kind of entry” into his capital. This event appears to have given rise to a good deal of unpleasantness :—

“Monsieur¹ having refused to suffer *Monsieur le Comte*² to ride with him, *Monsieur le Comte* did the same to M. de Guise, who withdrew. It happened also that the Provost of the Merchants³ claimed the right to march immediately before the King, on the ground that it was not an entry, but a joyous arrival, for which the marshals of France felt such contempt that they declined even to contest the point, and did not take part in the procession.”

¹ Philip, Duc d'Orléans, the King's brother.

² The Comte de Soissons.

³ Nicolas de Bailleux, afterwards *Surintendant of Finance*.

A few days after the King's return to Paris, Schomberg was deprived of the post of *Surintendant* of Finance and banished the Court. Since the Treaty of Montpellier Puisieux had been busily intriguing against him, in company with La Vieuville, a sworn enemy of Schomberg, and had accused him of gross mismanagement of the finances, if not worse. That he had mismanaged them was true enough, though how any other result could have been expected, when he was required to combine the duties of *Surintendant* with those of Grand Master of the Artillery on active service, it is difficult to see. However, his hands appear to have been perfectly clean, otherwise Richelieu would scarcely have recalled him to office so soon as he came into power, and, though he had committed a grave error in attaching himself to Condé and the war party, he was a more honest, as well as an abler, man than those who had brought about his fall.

Bassompierre, who had taken no part in this intrigue, and had, indeed, endeavoured to protect Schomberg, now proposed to the King to reappoint Sully to the office which he had filled so ably under Henri IV, a suggestion which did him much honour, since he and the old statesman had never been on friendly terms. But Puisieux and his father, the Chancellor Brulart de Sillery, objected, on the score of Sully's religion, and La Vieuville was made *Surintendant*.

La Vieuville was a man of some ability, but he was rash, corrupt and an unscrupulous intriguer; and no sooner was he admitted to the King's Council than he began to conspire, first, to get rid of the Chancellor and Puisieux, his benefactors, then, of all those whom the King admitted to his intimacy, and particularly of Bassompierre, of whom he appears to have conceived the bitterest jealousy.

Towards the end of that year a dispute of long standing between Diane de France, the widow of the Connétable de Montmorency, and the Duchesse de Chevreuse, was

adjudicated upon by Louis XIII. It appears that Madame de Montmorency had accepted the post of *dame d'honneur* to the Queen on the understanding that no *Surintendante* of her Majesty's Household should be appointed over her. This condition, however, had not been observed, and the Duchesse de Chevreuse, or the Duchesse de Luynes, as she was at that time, had been appointed *Surintendante*. The Duc de Montmorency, acting on behalf of his step-mother, requested the King to appoint someone to inquire into this weighty matter and report to the Council, and, as the Duc de Chevreuse, representing his wife, raised no objection, her request was granted. Neither nobleman had, of course, the least intention of compromising the interests of the lady he represented by adopting this course ; and their mortification may be imagined when, in November, Louis XIII cut the Gordian knot by depriving both Madame de Montmorency and Madame de Chevreuse of their charges.

In a conversation with Bassompierre, Puisieux asked him his opinion of the King's decision. Bassompierre frankly replied that he considered it the worst he had ever known him give, as he had thereby offended both parties, and that "the judge would be condemned to pay the costs of the action." Puisieux inquired what he meant, when he said that, in the unsettled condition of the kingdom, and the probability of another war with the Huguenots, who were angrily demanding the destruction of Fort Saint-Louis at La Rochelle,¹ it was most imprudent of the King to displease two such great Houses as those of Montmorency and Lorraine, and that he ought to indemnify forthwith both ladies for the loss of their charges ; otherwise, in the event of war, he might not be able to rely on the loyalty of their relatives.

Bassompierre spoke to Puisieux as one friend might

¹ Not only had this stipulation of the Treaty of Montpellier not been executed, but the governor of Fort Saint-Louis was working incessantly to strengthen this citadel.

speak to another, and, of course, believed that the latter would regard it as a private conversation. But the Minister, "to play the good valet," reported what the marshal had said, very possibly with some little embellishments of his own, to Louis XIII, who, in turn, informed La Vieuville ; and La Vieuville, delighted to find an opportunity of injuring Bassompierre, professed the utmost indignation, and "told the King that such words were criminal, and that they deserved the Bastille or worse." His Majesty did not send Bassompierre to the Bastille, but he frowned angrily whenever he saw him, and for a whole week refused to honour him with so much as a word. At the end of that time, however, he unbosomed himself to the Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld and his confessor Père Seguiran, who, fortunately, happened to be on friendly terms with the marshal, and, through their good offices, the latter succeeded in making his peace with the King.

This affair was only the prelude to further and more determined attempts by La Vieuville to deprive Bassompierre of the royal favour, but for the moment he was more intent on bringing about the downfall of the Chancellor and Puisieux, in which task he had the powerful support of Richelieu.

Since the dismissal of Schomberg, the Brûlarts, *père et fils*, had been all-powerful¹ and had mismanaged matters both at home and abroad. The treaty which had been signed between France, Savoy, and Venice in February, 1623, had pledged the contracting parties to take vigorous measures for the recovery of the Valtellina. But the Chancellor and his son had no wish to embark in a war which they felt themselves incapable of conducting, and when the Spanish Government offered to hand over the fortresses of the Valtellina to the Pope in deposit, on condition that his Holiness would assure the tranquillity

¹ Caumartin had died on January 21, 1623, and the Chancellor had obtained the Seals, without which his office was a sinecure.

of the country or restore them to Philip IV, they eagerly embraced this way out of the difficulty. Rome and Spain, however, were in accord to deceive France. The Duke of Feria, governor of the Milanese, did not deliver all the forts to the Papal troops, and the two most important strongholds, Ripa and Chiavenna, remained in Spanish hands; while, on his side, Gregory XV claimed that the Grisons should become Catholic, or that the Valtellina should be constituted a fourth League, with the same rights as the other Leagues of the Grisons. The Treaty of Paris had, in the words of the disgusted Venetian Ambassador, proved itself to be "nothing but a demonstration on paper."

At home, the Brûlarts trafficked in offices, and allowed, as was the custom, their relatives and friends to enrich themselves at the expense of the State. Such practices were regarded in those days as mere peccadilloes, but Richelieu, who was slowly but surely paving the way for his return to office, and was aware that there was no chance of realising his ambition so long as the Chancellor and his son remained in power, professed to be scandalised, and there can be no doubt that more than one of the pamphlets which appeared attacking the incapacity and greed of the Ministers in vigorous and not too refined language were inspired by his Eminence. At the same time, Richelieu adroitly insinuated to the King, through Marie de' Medici, that the Brûlarts were turning the great project on the Valtellina announced by the League of Paris to the shame of France, and Louis XIII, who keenly resented the impotence of his diplomacy, became more and more incensed against them. La Vieuville, on his part, was not idle and accused the Brûlarts, probably with justification, of having levied toll on the subsidies which were being sent to the Dutch. The consequence was that on New Year's Day, 1623, the King demanded the Seals from the Chancellor, and at the beginning of February ordered both him and his son to retire to one of their country-seats.

The King gave the Seals to d'Aligre, who, it will be remembered, would have received them in the autumn of 1622 but for Bassompierre's intervention. In consequence, the marshal was somewhat apprehensive that he might cherish a grudge against him, and went to offer him his congratulations with considerable misgivings as to how they would be received. To his surprise, however, d'Aligre greeted him with marked cordiality.

"At this," he says, "the others who had come to felicitate him were dumfounded, but I said to them aloud: 'Do not be astonished, gentlemen, at the cordiality with which the new Keeper of the Seals has received me; for I am the cause of the King having given them to him to-day.' 'I was not aware, Monsieur,' said he, 'that I was under this obligation to you; I beg you to tell me why.' 'Monsieur,' I answered, 'but for me, you would not have had them to-day, but a year ago.' Whereat he began to laugh and told me that it was true, but that I had done my duty; for, since I had not been solicited by him, with whom I was hardly acquainted, I was obliged to use my influence on behalf of my friend M. de Caumartin. Then he told me that he begged me to love him, and that he would swear before these gentlemen to be faithfully my servant and friend, as he had assuredly shown himself to be on every occasion that has arisen."

But if Bassompierre had nothing to fear from the good-natured d'Aligre, he had everything to apprehend from the jealous and unscrupulous La Vieuville.

"By this means [the disgrace of the Brûlarts] La Vieuville was in supreme favour, and from that time worked openly for my ruin, since he had not been able to compel me to abandon my friends and to bind myself to him in a close alliance, as he had begged me earnestly to do before Christmas."

However, the marshal did not allow any fear of approaching ruin to interfere with his enjoyment of the Fair of Saint-Germain and the other gaieties of that winter, during which the negotiations for the marriage of

the Prince of Wales (afterwards Charles I.) with the Infanta Maria Anna, sister of Philip IV, having been definitely broken off, the Earl of Holland arrived in Paris to sound the French Court on the question of an alliance between the prince and Henriette-Marie. The King and Queen each organised a grand ballet. In his Majesty's, which was entitled *les Voleurs*, Louis XIII represented a Dutch captain, M. de la Roche-Guyon a Dutch lady, and the Ducs de Chevreuse and de Luxembourg and the Maréchaux de Créquy and de Bassompierre impersonated pirates. Bassompierre had to recite the following verses :—

“Enfin malgré les flots me voici de retour,
La mer se promettait de noyer mon amour,
Dont la constance luy fait honte ;
Mais elle est bien loin de son compte :
Caliste, vos appas ont rompu son dessein,
Les flots où je me perds sont dedans vostre sein.”

At the beginning of March, La Vieuville complained to the King that, with the connivance of Puisieux, when he had been Secretary of State for War, Bassompierre had been drawing every year for the maintenance of the Swiss 24,000 livres more than he was entitled to. The marshal, on learning of this, angrily denied that he had received a sol more than was justly due, and proceeded to prove his statement in the presence of the King, when high words passed between him and the Minister. Nevertheless, his accounts were not passed, and the matter remained in abeyance.

La Vieuville, with all his faults, showed both energy and ability ; and he was the first to reverse the disastrous Spanish policy of the Court. He recalled the Commandeur de Sillery, the French Ambassador to Rome, where he had shown himself as feeble and undecided as his relatives in Paris ; sent the Marquis de Cœuvres, a good soldier and a skilful diplomatist, as Ambassador to Switzerland, to urge the Cantons, both Protestant and Catholic, to go to the assistance of the Grisons ; concluded offensive and

defensive alliances with the Dutch, which assured to them a subsidy for the next two years ; and warmly supported the English marriage-project. But he made many enemies besides Bassompierre, and feeling the need of conciliating the Queen-Mother, who for some weeks had absented herself from Court, as a protest against the treatment of Richelieu, he promised to obtain for her favourite admission to the Council.

This was no easy task, for the mediocrities who had so long surrounded Louis XIII had succeeded in inspiring him with their own dread of this great man, and the King was, in consequence, very unwilling to entrust him with office, added to which he still associated him with the followers of Concini, all of whom he held in aversion. "There is a man who would like to be of my Council," he observed one day to Praslin, as Richelieu passed by ; "but I cannot bring myself to this step, after all he has done against me." "I know him better than you do," he said on another occasion to Marie de' Medici, when she had been urging the Cardinal's claims upon him ; "he is a man of unmeasured ambition." Now, however, he did not withstand the request of his Minister, reinforced by the solicitations of the Queen-Mother, and on April 29, 1624, Richelieu re-entered the Council.

Meanwhile, La Vieuville had resumed hostilities against Bassompierre, whose intimacy with the King he appears to have regarded as the chief obstacle in the path of his ambition. This time he launched a far more serious charge against the marshal than that of drawing more money on account of the Swiss than he was entitled to, and accused him of being a pensioner of Spain.

It is difficult to say with any degree of certainty on what grounds this charge was based, since Bassompierre himself throws no light upon the subject. But it would appear from a manuscript of Dupuy in the Bibliothèque Nationale that, during the marshal's embassy to Madrid,

the Spanish Government had proposed to him a commercial treaty between France and Spain, and that in 1623 Bassompierre had presented a memorial to Louis XIII in favour of this project. In the margin of his copy of this memorial Dupuy gives his own opinion of the proposed treaty, and while praising the ability with which Bassompierre has stated the case in its favour, he foresees several objections, and among them, the following :—

“Without doubt this proposition of the King of Spain contains some hidden artifice, which his Majesty will not discover until after he has completely committed himself, and then it will be too late to remedy it.”

It is therefore not improbable that, at the beginning of the following year, La Vieuville had seized the pretext of this memorial to accuse Bassompierre of having accepted money from the Court of Madrid to advocate a proposal which was to the disadvantage of France.

However that may be, La Vieuville was very active in the matter, and in May caused the arrest of one Alphonso Lopez, a Spanish Moor, who had long resided in Paris, where he carried on an extensive trade in jewellery, tapestries, and *objets d'art*, and who, in the course of his business, was a frequent visitor to Bassompierre's house, “imagining that by his means,” says the marshal, “he might discover something against me.”

Bassompierre demanded an audience of Louis XIII, who was at Compiègne, in order that he might have an opportunity of defending himself ; but his Majesty did not seem anxious to grant it.

“At length, the King promised to speak to me one evening in June, on the rampart which is near his cabinet. . . . I said to him what God inspired me to say in favour of my innocence and against the calumny of La Vieuville ; in such fashion that I stood very well with him, and he [La Vieuville] very ill. And, the better to conceal our game, the King desired me not to speak to him in public, save when I came to take the password from him, when he



CHARLES, MARQUIS DE LA VIEUVILLE.

From a contemporary print.

would be able to say a few words to me, and I to him. And he said that he intended to seem displeased with me, and that I must not show any appearance of having been reconciled with him, and that if I had anything to say to him, it should be through the medium of Toiras, Beaumont, or the Chevalier de Souvré. Finally, after I had spoken to the King, I had no longer any doubt that La Vieuville would be completely ruined."

However, if La Vieuville was about to be ruined, it looked very much as though he would succeed in ruining Bassompierre first, notwithstanding that Richelieu, d'Aligre, and the Constable had all assured the marshal that they were resolved not to allow the Minister to prejudice their minds against him. Le Doux, a *maître des requêtes*, who had been entrusted with the duty of examining Lopez's ledgers and papers, had reported to La Vieuville that he had found that a certain Spaniard named Guadamiciles had furnished Bassompierre with a sum of 40,000 francs. The entry upon which Le Doux based this information was as follows :—

" *Al Sr. Mal. de Bassompicrre por guadamiciles, 40,000 Ms.*" ¹

Now, as Bassompierre explains, Lopez had received 40,000 maravedis from a merchant in Spain on account of some tapestries of gilded leather (*guadamiciles*) which the marshal had commissioned him to sell for him. But Le Doux and La Vieuville believed, or affected to believe, that *guadamiciles* was a proper name, and the latter pressed the King most urgently to have Bassompierre arrested forthwith and conveyed to the Bastille.

To this Louis XIII refused to consent, but he and all his Council admitted that it was most necessary to ascertain the identity of this mysterious Guadamiciles and to arrest him, if he were in France, and, in the event of his proving to be a Spanish banker, Bassompierre likewise.

¹ "To Seigneur Maréchal de Bassompierre, for gilded leathers, 40,000 maravedis."

The marshal learned all this from Lesdiguières, who, so soon as the Council rose, sent for him to warn him of his danger :

“ The Constable begged me to leave France for some time, in order to escape my disgrace, which was certain, and even offered me 10,000 crowns, if I were in need of money. I thanked him very humbly for his warning and his offer, but told him that he ought to give it to La Vieuville, who would be ruined in a month, and not myself. This worthy man sought to persuade me to yield to the present violence, but I (who knew more about the matter than I told him), assured him that I was as firmly established as La Vieuville was tottering. Nevertheless, on the morrow, he [La Vieuville] had the power to cause Colonel d'Ornano to be driven away from *Monsieur* brother of the King,¹ which caused the Constable to urge me anew to be gone ; but I assured him again of my safety and of the complete ruin of La Vieuville.”

Bassompierre had judged the situation correctly, for the man whom La Vieuville had introduced into the Council, in the hope of strengthening his own position, was gradually undermining it. La Vieuville's intention had been to make of Richelieu a mere consulting Minister, who would give advice only when called upon to do so, and whose sphere of activity would be limited by the four walls of the Council-chamber. The Cardinal resigned himself to this *rôle*, in appearance at least ; nevertheless, it was not long before he and his chief came into sharp collision.

At the beginning of June the Earls of Holland and Carlisle arrived in France to demand the hand of Henriette-Marie for the Prince of Wales, and La Vieuville, d'Aligre, and Richelieu were charged to discuss with the representatives of James I the clauses of the marriage

¹ Bassompierre appears to have got his dates mixed. He places the “ Guadamiciles ” affair in July, but the disgrace of Ornano, whose offence was that he had instigated *Monsieur* to demand admission to the Council, occurred at the beginning of June.

treaty. The Cardinal, although a warm partisan of the English alliance, had declared that "it was necessary for the men of France to seek in this alliance all the advantages possible for religion [*i.e.*, the Catholic religion]. . . . If not, it was greatly to be feared that they would bring down upon themselves the wrath of God, as did Jehosaphat, who, although a pious king, felt severely the Hand of God for having allied himself with Ahab, King of Israel, who persecuted the servants of God." He now demanded that the English Government should make the Catholics of England, in favour of the French princess, the same concessions in regard to the public exercise of their religion as they had consented to in the case of the Infanta. This was at once refused, and all that Holland and Carlisle would promise was liberty of private worship, and that, not by a formal engagement inserted in the treaty, but by a simple verbal promise on the part of James I. Richelieu pressed for an article in the contract, so that the engagement might be "more solemn and public," his object being that the English Catholics might feel themselves under a greater obligation to France. But the Ambassadors, perceiving his motive, remained firm, even when he declared it to be a *sine quâ non*.

La Vieuville was incensed that Richelieu should be compromising the English alliance for the sake of the English Catholics. "*Morbleu !*" said he, "these priests are spoiling all my work." He recalled from England the French Ambassador, the Comte de Tillières, a brother-in-law of Bassompierre, who had also shown himself too solicitous for the interests of the Catholics, and told Holland and Carlisle that the French demands were only made for form's sake and to satisfy the Pope and the Catholics of France, and that it was really a matter of indifference to Louis XIII how their master treated his Catholic subjects. A little later, becoming uneasy at the slow progress of the negotiations, he caused James I to be informed that the King would be content with a simple

promise of toleration. Richelieu, warned by the Secretary of State Brienne of the game La Vieuville was playing, vowed to make him repent it.

La Vieuville, all unconscious of his danger, went forward boldly. He gave Marescot, who was being sent on an embassy to Germany, instructions differing materially from those which had been decided upon in the Council. He tried to persuade *Monsieur* that Richelieu had been responsible for Ornano's disgrace. In connivance with his father-in-law Beaumarchais, a high official of the Treasury, he entered into important financial transactions without consulting the King or his colleagues. He left the pensions even of the greatest nobles unpaid and ignored their remonstrances. He was haughty, churlish, and incautious in his language, even when speaking of the King. Never did Minister so persistently court his fall.

Richelieu, perceiving that the time to strike had come, launched against him his friend Fançan, a canon of Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois, and the ablest publicist of his time, whom he had already employed with effect against the Brûlarts, and who published a pamphlet entitled *la Voix Publique au Roi*, which appears to have had a great vogue:—

“ It is said, Sire, that La Vieuville plays the Maréchal d'Ancre, the Luynes and the Puisieux all together, and that so great is his presumption, that in your Council he takes upon himself to decide everything.”

The voice of the public had, however, nothing but praise for the Cardinal de Richelieu, who was “ refined up to twenty-two carats,” “ adroit and prudent,” and “ showed no inclination to seek any other support than in the legitimate authority of his Majesty.” It was hoped that he would be to the King what the Cardinal Georges d'Amboise had been to the well-loved Louis XIII.

Then Richelieu revealed to the King the irregular proceedings of La Vieuville, and experienced little difficulty

in arousing Louis to a high pitch of resentment against a Minister who was acting without his knowledge, and who, in the matter of the English Catholics, was misrepresenting his sentiments and compromising his conscience. Towards the end of July the disgrace of La Vieuville was resolved upon, and the King, who was at Germigny-l'Évêque, the summer residence of the Bishops of Meaux, sent Toiras to Paris to inform Bassompierre of his decision.

On the way this gentleman had the misfortune to meet a certain Sieur de Bernay, who, happening to have a grievance against him, insisted on receiving satisfaction then and there ; and, as the duel which ensued resulted in M. de Toiras having to take to his bed, the royal message never reached Bassompierre. However, two or three days later, he received orders from the King to come to Saint-Germain early on the morrow without fail. He went, accompanied by the Duc de Bellegarde, and was very cordially received by his Majesty, who told him and the Grand Equerry that he had decided to disgrace La Vieuville.

While they were with the King, who should arrive but La Vieuville himself, accompanied by his brother-in-law the Maréchal de Vitry, and the Minister could not conceal his astonishment and mortification at the sight of Louis walking up and down between Bellegarde and Bassompierre and apparently on the best of terms with the latter. On perceiving La Vieuville, the King left his companions and went to speak to him, while Bassompierre approached the Maréchal de Vitry, who told him that he had been much distressed at seeing him on such bad terms with his brother-in-law, and that he was most anxious to effect a reconciliation between them. "Why should I be reconciled to him," answered Bassompierre, "at the moment that he is about to be disgraced, when I refused when he was all-powerful ?" "What ! disgraced !" cried the astonished Vitry. "Yes, disgraced ; and never trust me again if a fortnight hence he is still *Surintendant*."

No sooner was the conversation between the King and

La Vieuville at an end, than Vitry drew his brother-in-law aside and informed him of what Bassompierre had just said ; upon which the Minister, in his turn, immediately reported it to Louis XIII. The King assured him that he had not the least intention of dispensing with his services, and that Bassompierre was more likely to be disgraced than himself ; and, so embarrassed was the young monarch that, had La Vieuville been bold enough to demand the immediate exile of the marshal, as Richelieu would have done in similar circumstances, it is not improbable that the latter would have had good reason to regret his indiscretion. However, fortunately for Bassompierre, he did not do so.

Louis XIII afterwards reprimanded Bassompierre sharply for having placed him in such an awkward position ; but the marshal excused himself on the ground that, after all the distress that La Vieuville had caused him for months past, it would be letting him off far too lightly only to make him feel the bitterness of disgrace when it arrived, and that " he had wished him to taste it in anticipation."

A few days later, during a meeting of the King's Council, his Majesty sent for Bassompierre and, to the great astonishment of La Vieuville, to whom he had said nothing about the matter, informed the marshal that, having carefully examined the accounts of the Swiss which were in dispute, he had come to the conclusion that he had only claimed what was justly due. And then, turning to La Vieuville, he curtly directed him to see that the money was paid forthwith.

" He [La Vieuville] answered not a word and made only the reverence of acquiescence. The members of the Privy Council offered me their congratulations in his presence, and the King spoke to me most graciously. Then La Vieuville saw clearly that his disgrace was at hand, and he began to tell the King that he wished to resign his office ; but the King gave him fair words."

A day or two after this, Bassompierre requested permission of Louis XIII to bring an action against La Vieuville before the Parlement, so soon as he should cease to be a Minister, for having falsely accused him to his Majesty of being a pensioner of Spain, in order that he might be punished as he deserved. But the King assured the marshal that he intended to punish him sufficiently himself, by dismissing him with ignominy from office and imprisoning him. However, he enjoined him to say nothing about it to anyone.

Louis XIII seems to have played with the unfortunate La Vieuville up to the very moment of his disgrace much as a cat would play with a mouse. The young King was, not only deceitful, but, like most weak natures, cruel and spiteful, and he would appear to have taken a positive pleasure in inflicting suffering upon those who had the misfortune to incur his resentment.

" On the morrow,¹ the King went after dinner to visit the Queen his mother at Rueil ; and La Vieuville, having got wind of what was being prepared against him, packed up his baggage and came, on his way back to Paris, to offer the King his resignation of the office of *Surintendant* and his place in the Council, telling him that he did not propose to return again to Saint-Germain. The King told him that he must not do this, and that he was distressing himself quite needlessly ; and he promised him also that he would give him his dismissal with his own lips, and that he would permit him to come and take leave of him when that should happen. And so he [La Vieuville] felt reassured and returned to Saint-Germain. But, that evening, as the servants were making rough music in the back court in honour of an officer of the Kitchen who had married a widow, *Monsieur*, brother of the King, sent word to them to come into the court of the château to see him ; and all the scullions and others did so, bringing with them pans which they beat. When La Vieuville heard this uproar, he imagined that it was directed against him, and sent to tell the Cardinal de Richelieu

¹ August 12,

that people were coming to assassinate him. The Cardinal mounted to his chamber and reassured him. But, the next morning, the King, having sent for him in his Council, told him that, as he had promised him, he informed him himself that he had no further need of his services, and that he would permit him to take leave of him. Then, as he [La Vieuville] was going out, M. de Tresmes¹ made him prisoner, and, a little while afterwards, a coach and the King's mounted musketeers arrived, and conducted him to the Château of Amboise, from which he effected his escape a year afterwards.”²

From the day of La Vieuville's disgrace Richelieu was the virtual head of the Council, and for the first time since the death of Henri IV a firm hand guided the ship of State.

¹ Captain of the *Gardes du Corps*.

² There was some talk of bringing La Vieuville to trial, on a charge of malversation, but the real motive for imprisoning him was to prevent him from revenging himself for his disgrace by disclosing the secret of the negotiations which were in progress. When there was no longer anything to fear from his indiscretion, he was allowed to escape.

CHAPTER XXXI

Vigorous foreign policy of Richelieu—The recovery of the Valtellina—His projected blow at the Spanish power in Northern Italy frustrated by a fresh Huguenot insurrection—Bassompierre sent to Brittany—Marriage of Charles I and Henrietta—Maria—Bassompierre offered the command of a new army which is to be despatched to Italy—He demands 7,000 men from the Army of Champagne—The Duc d'Angoulême and Louis de Marillac, the generals commanding that army, have recourse to the bogey of a German invasion in order to retain these troops—Bassompierre declines the appointment—Conversation between Bassompierre and the Spanish Ambassador Mirabello on the subject of peace between France and Spain—The marshal is empowered to treat for peace with Mirabello—Singular conduct of the Ambassador—News arrives from Madrid that Philip IV has revoked the powers given to Mirabello—Bassompierre is sent as Ambassador Extraordinary to the Swiss Cantons to counteract the intrigues of the house of Austria and the Papacy—His reception in Switzerland—Lavish hospitality which he dispenses—Complete success of his negotiations.

NEVER had France stood more in need of such guidance than at the moment when Richelieu assumed the direction of affairs. At home, there was for the moment peace, though it was to prove but of brief duration ; but abroad the position of affairs had become so threatening that even the dullest minds had begun to be alarmed. Spain and Austria, in closest harmony of religious and political aims, were trampling on the liberties of Europe ; Germany seemed prostrate at the Emperor's feet ; Spain dominated all Italy, with the exception of Venice and Savoy. All the provinces which owed allegiance to the two Powers had been knit together ; the subjugation of the Palatinate and the Lower Rhine secured their connection with the Netherlands and menaced the very existence of the Dutch ; the Valtellina forts commanded the road between the Spaniards in the Milanese and the Austrians on the Danube and in the Tyrol.

Richelieu at once resolved to assail the Austro-Spanish power at both critical points. In the North, he did not interfere in arms, but by subsidies and skilful negotiations he organised a Northern League, under the leadership of Christian IV of Denmark, and arrested the progress of the Spaniards in the United Provinces. In the Valtellina, however, he had recourse to more vigorous measures.

The Spaniards had ended by handing over the forts which had remained in their possession to the Papal troops, but though the period during which the Pope¹ was to hold them in deposit had long expired and he had received all the guarantees he could desire for the security of the Catholic religion, the Holy Father could not bring himself to hand over the Valtellina to the heretic Grisons. The Spaniards, on their side, believed themselves more assured of the Valtellina in the hands of Urban VIII than in their own, and imagined that a cardinal would never venture to make war on the Pope. They did not yet know Richelieu.

In November, Coeuvres, who had persuaded the Protestant Cantons to arm for the recovery of the Valtellina, transformed himself from an ambassador into a general and marched into the Grisons, at the head of a small army of French and Swiss. The districts held by the Austrians at once rose in revolt ; the Grisons declared themselves freed from the treaty which had been imposed on them, and the Imperialists hastily withdrew. Having secured the Tyrolese passes, Coeuvres descended from the Engadine by Poschiavo and entered the Valtellina. The entry of some Spanish troops into Chiavenna served to cover the attack directed against the soldiers of the Pope, and in a few weeks Chiavenna and all the forts of the Valtellina had capitulated, although the French general had no siege-artillery with which to reduce them. The Pope's

¹ Gregory XV had died on July 8, 1623, and was succeeded by Cardinal Maffeo Barberini, who had assumed the name of Urban VIII.

soldiers and their standards were respectfully sent back to his Holiness.

Loud was the outcry, not only at Rome and Madrid, but even amongst the High Catholic party in France, against the "State Cardinal" who was trampling the Church beneath his feet.¹ The Pope made less noise than his partisans; he recognised that a new power had arisen in France, and he had no desire to suffer worse things at the hands of this redoubtable Minister. He contented himself by sending his nephew, Cardinal Francisco Barberini,² as Legate to France to lodge a formal protest and endeavour to accommodate the affair, and hastened to despatch the dispensation for the marriage of Henriette-Marie, which had been long awaited. Richelieu had caused a gentle hint to be conveyed to the Holy Father that, if his consent were any longer withheld, it might be necessary to celebrate the marriage without it.

Richelieu did not rest content with the recovery of the Valtellina. He concerted with the Duke of Savoy a movement which, if successful, would shake the Spanish power in Northern Italy to its foundations. A quarrel between Charles Emmanuel and Genoa was to form the pretext for an invasion of the territory of that republic; the Duke would attack, and France would furnish an auxiliary army. Genoa was, not only the ally, but the banker of Spain, and its capture would bring about a financial panic in that country, and, at the same time,

¹ The accusation was a true one. Richelieu had proved that nothing would stay his arm when the interests of France were at stake.

² "He [Barberini]," writes Bassompierre, "was received, lodged and entertained with all the honours that it was customary to render to Legates. But, after several conferences had been held and divers treaties proposed, not having got what he expected, he came to Fontainebleau to take leave of the King, and immediately afterwards, without waiting to receive the customary honour of being escorted and his expenses defrayed on his journey through France, he unexpectedly took his departure, having previously refused the King's present. The King summoned the princes and officers of the Crown together with certain presidents of his Court of Parlement, and held a famous council at Fontainebleau to deliberate upon this extravagant departure, where nothing was resolved upon except to let him go."

interrupt her maritime communications with the Milanese.

At the beginning of 1625 all was in readiness ; Charles Emmanuel had mobilised his army ; a considerable force under the command of Lesdiguières was being collected on the frontier ; and the Dutch had promised to send a squadron to the Mediterranean to assist in the blockade of Genoa. Suddenly, to the astonishment and indignation of Richelieu, and, indeed, of all patriotic Frenchmen, came the news of a fresh Huguenot insurrection. The Rochellois, angry and alarmed that their repeated demands for the destruction of Fort Saint-Louis, the bugbear of their town, had had no effect, had imagined the moment favourable to secure by a recourse to arms what they despaired of obtaining by any other means. They had appealed to Rohan and Soubise, and the two brothers had been so blind to the interests both of their country and their faith as to agree to co-operate with them. On January 17, Soubise, in command of a number of vessels fitted out by the Rochellois, seized the île de Ré, and captured in the harbour of Blavet, on the Breton coast, seven royal vessels which lay there, after which he laid siege to the fort which commanded the place.

On the news of Soubise's proceedings, the Duc de Vendôme, governor of Brittany, had raised all the noblesse of the province and what infantry he could muster to oppose him ; but a report reached the King that Vendôme was actually in league with Soubise and the Rochellois, and that they had attacked Blavet at his instigation, and with the intention of handing it over to him. Upon this Louis XIII despatched Bassompierre to Brittany, with full powers to take what action he considered necessary against Vendôme, in the event of this information being correct. The marshal left Paris on January 28 and proceeded to Angers, where he gave orders that a regiment which was in garrison there should follow him to Brittany so soon as possible, with four pieces of cannon. He then went to Nantes, where he arranged

with the governor to furnish him with as many men as he could raise. On arriving at Hennebon, however, he learned that Soubise had abandoned the siege of the fort at Blavet and sailed away, carrying off with him six of the seven ships which he had seized ; the other he had been obliged to abandon, together with one of his own ships, which had been damaged by collision with a jetty at the entrance to the harbour.

The following day he proceeded to Blavet, where he found Vendôme with the force which he had raised to oppose Soubise. The prince was greatly distressed to learn that he was suspected of being in collusion with the rebels, and wished to know whether Bassompierre intended to request the Parlement of Rennes to hold an inquiry into his conduct. But the marshal, having satisfied himself that, though "*César Monsieur*," as he was called, was not a person in whom much confidence could be reposed, he was, on this occasion at any rate, innocent of the charge which had been brought against him, assured him that he had no such intention. About the middle of February he returned to Paris to render an account of his journey to the King, and to assure him of the innocence of his half-brother, at which his Majesty was doubtless much relieved. However, before many months had passed, Louis XIII. was obliged to place his restless relative under lock and key.

After his descent upon Blavet, Soubise seized the île d'Oléron, and by the spring, thanks to the exertions of Rohan, the Huguenots in Upper Languedoc, Quercy, and the Cévennes were in revolt. It is true that even in these districts many stood aloof and refused to embarrass the Government at a time when it was engaged in hostilities with the most implacable enemies of their faith ; but the insurrection was sufficiently formidable to cause great uneasiness, and to necessitate the retention at home of troops which might otherwise have been employed beyond the Alps. In these circumstances, it was

impossible for Richelieu to push the war in Liguria with the vigour which he had intended. "It was then," writes Bassompierre, "that the Cardinal de Richelieu said wisely to the King that, so long as there was a party established within his realm, it would never be possible to undertake anything outside it; and that he ought to think of exterminating it before meditating other designs." On April 9 the Duke of Savoy defeated the Genoese and Spaniards before Voltaggio, and a fortnight later the Constable took Gavi. But, acting doubtless in accordance with the orders of the French Government, Lesdiguières declined to undertake the siege of Genoa without a fleet, and Charles Emmanuel pressed him in vain.

The death of James I, which occurred on March 27, 1625, did not delay the marriage of his son—now Charles I—and Henriette-Marie, which was celebrated in Notre-Dame on May 11, the Duc de Chevreuse acting as proxy for the King. On the 24th Buckingham arrived unexpectedly to escort the bride to England, and caused, Bassompierre tells us, a great sensation, "both by his person, which was very handsome, and by his jewels and apparel and his great liberality."

Buckingham tried to persuade Richelieu to sign the League of the North and couple the restoration of the Palatinate with the Valtellina question; but the Cardinal was disinclined to surrender France's liberty of action, besides which, the presumptuous and frivolous favourite did not inspire him with any confidence.

Bassompierre was one of the nobles appointed to escort the new Queen of England to Boulogne, where she embarked on June 22. But, unfortunately, he preserves a discreet silence concerning certain incidents which occurred *en route*, as it would be interesting to have his version of the romance of "M. de Bocquinghem" and Anne of Austria, which so profoundly irritated Louis XIII against his consort and laid the foundations of that ill-will which for a time prevailed between England and France.

In September the islands of Ré and Oléron were retaken, and the fleet of the Rochellois defeated by Montmorency, who commanded the King's ships. But in Liguria things were going badly for France. The Swiss had allowed more than 20,000 Austrians to pass into Italy to the assistance of the Spanish and Genoese, who had carried the war into Piedmont and laid siege to Verrua, while the Valtellina was also threatened. Reinforcements were urgently demanded, and one morning, while the Privy Council was sitting, Louis XIII sent for Bassompierre, offered him the command of the new army which he proposed to despatch into Italy, and asked what troops he would require. The marshal "spoke as well as God wished to inspire him on this matter," and answered that if his Majesty would permit him to choose 6,000 foot and 800 horse from the Army of Champagne, he would send at once into Switzerland to raise 4,000 men, who would join him at Geneva, and that with these forces he would engage, not only to force the enemy to raise the siege of Verrue, but to capture some places in the Milanese.

To this Louis XIII agreed, and gave instructions to Michel de Marillac, Chief of the Finances, to furnish the marshal with the funds he required. But Marillac, not only did not execute this order, but sent in all haste that same evening a courier to warn his brother who, with the Duc d'Angoulême, commanded the army of Champagne, that it was intended to break up their army and send the greater part of it into Italy. These two nobles, who had no desire to be deprived of their command, promptly had recourse to the bogey of a German invasion, and wrote to the King that they had the most positive information that the Imperialists were about to enter France at two points, from Lorraine and the Palatinate; that, in consequence, M. d'Angoulême was about to throw himself into Metz, which he would preserve for the King or die; while M. de Marillac had gone to Verdun, with the intention of defending it to his last gasp; but, as

they feared that the forces at their disposal might be insufficient to withstand the invaders, they must entreat his Majesty to send them four regiments of foot and 500 horse with all possible despatch.

“Upon this,” says Bassompierre, “the King and his Council, who took all this for Gospel truth, told me that they were unable to withdraw any troops from the Army of Champagne, to which, indeed, they were obliged to send reinforcements; and I, after having endeavoured to make them comprehend that it was an imposture invented to perpetuate the employment of these gentlemen and to involve the King in useless expense, excused myself and refused the troops which they proposed to give me to go to the relief of Italy.”

Such troops as could be spared were accordingly entrusted to the Comte de Vignolles, whom Bassompierre says did not arrive at Verrua until the siege of that town had been raised, but this is incorrect.¹

On the evening of the King’s birthday—September 27—the Court being then at Fontainebleau, the Spanish Ambassador, the Marquis de Mirabello, approached Bassompierre and invited him to come and watch the fireworks with him. So soon as they were alone, the Ambassador, speaking in Spanish, told the marshal that it seemed to him greatly to be regretted that Louis XIII had not authorised him [Bassompierre] to negotiate a settlement of the Valtellina question, as he had done in 1621. “You would undoubtedly have accomplished it,” said he, “and, if you are willing, you will accomplish it yet; and this I promise.” “Monsieur,” replied Bassompierre coldly, “I am not fortunate in the making of treaties. You see that that of Madrid, which was of my making, has already cost the contracting parties twenty millions of gold to break it or maintain it. And,

¹ The siege of Verrua was raised on November 17, 1625, as the result of a defeat inflicted on the Spaniards before the walls of the town. Vignolles had arrived on the 9th.

besides, it is not pleasant to treat with people or for people who do not keep their promises, should it not please them to do so." Mirabello, however, was proof against this rebuff, and persisted that he and the marshal would soon be able to arrange terms of peace satisfactory to all parties concerned, provided that Louis XIII would furnish Bassompierre with the same powers with which the Catholic King had already entrusted him. The marshal thereupon told him that he would "esteem himself very happy to contribute to the best of his ability to so good and holy an affair," and that he would speak to the King on the matter and inform his Excellency of the result.

It was not, however, to the King to whom Bassompierre first addressed himself, but to Marie de' Medici and Richelieu, who, when the fireworks were over, had retired into the Queen-Mother's cabinet. For it was these two, in close alliance for the time being, who now directed all things, and to venture to approach Louis XIII on a matter of State, save by their gracious permission, would have been the height of imprudence. The Queen-Mother and the Cardinal approved of Mirabello's proposition, and told Bassompierre to go and inform the King, warning him, however, not to allow his Majesty, whose *amour-propre* was easily wounded, to suspect that he had spoken to them. The next morning the matter was submitted by Louis XIII to the Council, and it was decided that the marshal should be given full authority to treat with the Ambassador of Spain; but Bassompierre asked that Schomberg should be associated with him, and his request was granted.

Some days later the first conference took place at Saint-Germain, whither the Court had removed. It lasted more than four hours, and when it terminated they were "not without great hope of concluding a great, good and stable pacification between the two kings." Mirabello returned to Saint-Germain the following day, and the negotiations progressed so smoothly that there was every

appearance that the next session would see their task accomplished. But next morning the Ambassador sent to excuse himself on the ground that his wife had been taken ill, and for two days they heard nothing further from him. Meantime, a courier arrived from Du Fargis, the French Ambassador at Madrid, with the news that Philip IV, although it had been his intention to negotiate peace through his Ambassador, had revoked the powers with which he had entrusted him, without giving any reason for this sudden change. The Council thereupon decided that Bassompierre should go to Paris, and, on the pretext of inquiring after the health of the Ambassador's wife, endeavour to ascertain the reason for Mirabello's singular conduct. This the marshal did, when the Ambassador complained of the want of confidence which the French Government had shown him, by negotiating with him when they had instructed Du Fargis to treat with the Court of Madrid. Bassompierre reported what Mirabello had said to the Council, who all expressed great astonishment, since Du Fargis had been given no power to treat with the Spanish Government. However, the explanation of this apparent mystery was to be forthcoming a little later.

Meanwhile, disquieting reports were arriving from the French agents in Switzerland, who represented that the Cantons were falling away from their old attachment to France, as was proved by the fact that they had granted a passage to the German troops who had been sent to the assistance of the Spaniards, and by other ominous incidents. It was greatly to be feared, they wrote, that, unless immediate steps were taken to counteract the persistent intrigues of the House of Austria and the Papacy in Switzerland, and to reassure the Swiss in regard to the discharge of France's financial obligations towards them, the old alliance would be practically destroyed. And they suggested that the Maréchal de Bassompierre, who,

as the much-beloved Colonel-General of the Swiss troops in the French service, would be sure of a cordial welcome, who spoke both French and German with equal fluency, and who had already given proof of his diplomatic capabilities, should be sent on a special embassy to the Cantons, when it was quite possible he might be able to re-establish everything. This proposal was warmly supported by the Venetians and the Duke of Savoy, who undertook to instruct their representatives in Switzerland to second all his negotiations ; and though Bassompierre would not appear to have been at all anxious to undertake the mission, which would entail his absence from the winter gaieties of the Court and Paris, " the King insisted, and he yielded out of pure obedience."

On November 18, taking with him 200,000 crowns " to facilitate his negotiation," he left Paris with an imposing suite, and travelled by way of Sens, Dijon, and Besançon to Basle, where he arrived on December 8. At Basle he was received with great honour ; cannon fired salutes, several thousand soldiers or armed burghers marched in front of him or lined the streets, and so soon as he reached the house where he was to lodge, the Senate came in a body to salute him and " to make him a present of fish, wine, and oats, the most ample that could be made to anyone " ; after which a score of them sat down to supper with him.

On the following morning Bassompierre proceeded to the Town Hall, where the Senators were assembled, and delivered the first of the many harangues which he was to make during his stay in Switzerland. He then returned to his house, to which shortly afterwards all the Senate came to deliver the reply which they had drawn up, and to bring him another present of fish and wine, which they assisted him to consume. After dinner they took him to see the Arsenal, the natural history collection of the celebrated Swiss doctor Felix Plater, and the other sights of their town.

On the 10th, after having again entertained the Senate to dinner, he took his departure and proceeded by way of Liestall and Balstall to Soleure, where he was received with the same honours as at Basle.

At Soleure he had several conferences with the French Ambassador, the Comte de Miron, and received deputations from various towns and Cantons, whom he entertained very sumptuously.

A few days before Christmas he sent despatches to the Cantons convening a General Diet at Soleure for January 7, which, however, at the request of the Protestant Cantons, was postponed until the 12th. In the interval Bassompierre and Miron lost no opportunity of ingratiating themselves with the Swiss, and gave several banquets and balls.

“ On Tuesday, the 6th [January], the Day of the Kings, I gave a solemn feast to the Council of Soleure, at the Ambassador’s house, and after a great deal of liquor had been consumed, the ball took place.”

A day or two before the Diet opened, the Papal Nuncio Scapi, Bishop of Campagna, arrived at Soleure. Bassompierre had invited him to be present, although he was aware that he would do everything in his power to prevent the Catholic Cantons from coming to a resolution favourable to France. But he was a pompous, irascible and bigoted ecclesiastic, who was unlikely to make a favourable impression on the deputies, and, anyway, the marshal would be afforded an opportunity of confuting his arguments.

The Diet assembled on the 12th, and its first business was to pass a resolution that the deputies should go in a body, preceded by their beadles, to salute the Maréchal de Bassompierre. This, Bassompierre tells us, was an honour which had never been paid to anyone before. The following day the deputies sent six of their number to escort the Ambassadors of the King of France to the Diet,

where Bassompierre laid his proposals before them and addressed them at considerable length.

“ Then the same deputies came to escort me back, and, when the assembly rose, they all came to my house in a body to thank me, as they had done the previous day, and from there we all went to the banquet which I had caused to be made ready for them in the Town Hall, where all the deputies, ambassadors, colonels and captains, to the number of 120 persons, were magnificently entertained, and afterwards 500 other persons. Then we went to the house of the Ambassador-Ordinary, where a ball took place.”

On the 14th the Nuncio had an audience of the Catholic deputies, in which he made a very bitter harangue against France, in the hope of putting a spoke in Bassompierre’s wheel. The marshal, however, had taken the precaution to invite the Catholic deputies to dine with him, and the good cheer he provided would seem to have gone far to neutralise the effect of the Nuncio’s eloquence. In the evening he entertained the representatives of the Protestant Cantons to supper, and sent them away equally well pleased.

Next day the Diet waited upon Bassompierre and informed him that they had decided to follow the advice which he had given them, namely, to demand the restoration of the Valtellina to the Grisons and “ to refuse to whomsoever declined to acquiesce in this aid succour or passage through their country.” The marshal thanked the deputies very heartily, and, after they had taken their departure, could not resist the temptation of paying a visit to the Nuncio, who, having already been informed of the resolution of the Diet, was in a very bad temper and “ quarrelled with him two or three times.”

On the 16th the marshal sent to demand audience of the Catholic deputies, as he desired to have an opportunity of refuting the statements which Scapi had made to them two days before, “ for the honour and interest of the King

his master." The Catholic deputies did him "the peculiar and unusual honour" of coming to his house to hear what he had to say to them, when he addressed them at great length and wiped the floor, so to speak, with the unfortunate Nuncio. This speech seems to have had a very good effect, for in the evening the Diet sent a deputation to inform him that they were prepared to offer a levy of 15,000 men to the King of France.

Two days later the Nuncio, thoroughly discomfited, took his departure "in great anger," and Bassompierre celebrated his victory by giving a sumptuous banquet to all the deputies of the Diet, during which "the gentlemen of Soleure came to perform a war-dance before his house." After the banquet, a deputation from the Diet interviewed him on the vexed question of the debts which the Very Christian King owed the Swiss, upon which their spokesman, the *avoyer*, or chief magistrate, of Berne, waxed very eloquent. However, as this gentleman and his colleagues were all pretty mellow, Bassompierre succeeded in satisfying them perhaps more easily than he would have otherwise done, and the day concluded most harmoniously with a ballet, a ball, and "a very splendid collation" at the house of the French Ambassador.

On the 21st the Diet dispersed, in high good-humour, since Bassompierre had not only defrayed all the expenses of the deputies on a very liberal scale, but liquidated a part of France's debt to the Cantons, and a year's arrears of all private pensions.

A few days later Bassompierre paid a visit to Berne, into which he made a magnificent entry, and, after being shown all the sights of the town, was entertained to a most splendid banquet at the Hôtel de Ville. "Three hundred persons sat down to table," he says, "and we remained there all day."

On leaving Berne, the marshal returned to Soleure, where he remained until the end of February, for there was much business still to be transacted and many

deputations to be received. On the 22nd of the month he received a despatch from Louis XIII directing him to leave Switzerland and proceed to Nancy on a mission to the new Duke of Lorraine, Charles IV, that eccentric prince who was to cause France so much trouble in years to come. On the following day, therefore, he took leave of his many friends at Soleure and crossed the Jura to Basle, where he was again received with great honours ; and on the 25th arrived at Mulhausen.

If we are to believe an anonymous poet of the time, the success of Bassompierre's mission to Switzerland was largely due to the hospitality which he dispensed with so lavish a hand :

“ Quis Marti Bacchum, pateram quis non preferat ensi,
Helveticæ gentis si nova pacta manent ?
Plus facit in mensa Bassumpetreus et inter
Pocula, quam reliqui seva per arma duces.”

But if good cheer played a not unimportant part in facilitating his negotiations, it is evident, from the despatches and speeches of the marshal which are to be found in the account of his embassy which he has left us,¹ that he had handled a difficult situation with rare skill and tact. His speeches, admirably arranged, forceful, and at times even eloquent, and brightened by amusing quips and sallies, make very interesting reading, and his ready courtesy and imperturbable good-humour served to surmount what might otherwise have proved serious obstacles.

¹ *Ambassade du Maréchal de Bassompierre en Suisse, l'an 1625.*
[Amsterdam, 1668.]

CHAPTER XXXII

Bassompierre goes on a mission to Charles IV of Lorraine—He returns to France—The Venetian Ambassador Contarini informs the marshal that it is rumoured that a secret treaty has been signed between France and Spain—Richelieu authorises Bassompierre to deny that such a treaty exists, but the same day the marshal learns from the King that the French Ambassador at Madrid has signed a treaty, though unauthorised to do so—Indignation of Bassompierre, who, however, refrains from denouncing the treaty, which it is decided not to disavow—Explanation of this diplomatic imbroglio—Growing strength of the aristocratic opposition to Richelieu—The marriage of *Monsieur*—The “*Conspiration des Dames*”—Intrigues of the Duchesse de Chevreuse—Madame de Chevreuse and Chalais—Objects of the conspirators—Arrest of the Maréchal d'Ornano—Indignation of *Monsieur*—Conversation of Bassompierre with the prince—Plot against the life or liberty of Richelieu—Chalais is forced by the Commandeur de Valençay to reveal it to the Cardinal—“The quarry is no longer at home!”—Alarm of *Monsieur*—His abject submission to the King and Richelieu—He resumes his intrigues—Chalais is again involved in the conspiracy by Madame de Chevreuse—Arrest of the Duc de Vendôme and his half-brother the Grand Prior.

BEFORE proceeding to Nancy, Bassompierre paid a visit to his younger brother, now Marquis de Removille, and his family at Mirecourt, and spent a day at his own château of Harouel. On March 3 he made his entry into Nancy, escorted by a great number of the nobility of Lorraine, who were assembled there for the meeting of the Estates, and was lodged in the Palace, where he was very hospitably entertained. Amongst those whom he met was the Prince de Phalsbourg, a natural son of the late Cardinal Louis de Guise, who gave a banquet in his honour, and Marguerite de Lorraine, youngest daughter of Duke François, who in 1632 became the second wife of *Monsieur*.

His mission, which related to the candidature of Charles IV's younger brother for the bishopric of Strasbourg, was soon discharged, and on March 16 he reached

Paris, after an absence of four months. Louis XIII received him very graciously, and took him to visit the Queen-Mother, and afterwards to the apartments of Anne of Austria, whose position since her little escapade with Buckingham had been far from a pleasant one, her royal husband treating her with the most marked coldness.

At the Court Bassompierre found the Prince de Piedmont, who had been sent by his father, Charles Emmanuel, to persuade Louis XIII to prosecute the war in Italy with the utmost vigour during the coming spring. Créquy had been despatched to Paris by the Constable with the same object ; and they begged Bassompierre to go with them so soon as possible to the King, when they hoped that their united solicitations would induce his Majesty to come to a decision in accordance with their wishes.

There was certainly every indication that the French Government were disposed to a vigorous offensive. At the beginning of February peace had been signed with the Huguenots, and they were now free to employ all their resources against the foreign enemy. The King had appointed the Prince of Piedmont lieutenant-general of his armies beyond the Alps, and had promised reinforcements of 8,000 foot and 1,000 horse to the Army of Italy, to which he intended to send the bulk of the troops now in the Valtellina ; while Bassompierre, with the levy which the Swiss cantons had promised, was, it was understood, to invade the Milanese. However, the hopes of the anti-Spanish party and of France's allies were about to be rudely shattered.

Two or three days after Bassompierre's return, he happened to visit the Venetian Ambassador, Contarini, who told him that the republic's representative at Madrid had sent information that a secret treaty had been signed there between France and Spain. The marshal affected to treat the matter as a *canard* and assured him that it

was impossible ; nevertheless, he felt decidedly uneasy, and having to go and see Richelieu that evening to give him an account of his mission to Switzerland, he told him what Contarini had said.

" He [Richelieu] pressed my hand and answered that I might be assured that there was no thought of a treaty, and that the Spaniards were, after their knavish fashion, spreading false reports to create ill feeling between us and our allies, whom I could reassure. And this I resolved to do and to go on the morrow to visit Contarini, to set his mind at rest on this matter. The same evening I saw the Prince of Piedmont and told him of the apprehensions of Contarini, of how I had acquainted the Cardinal de Richelieu with them, and of the answer he had given me. The Prince replied that the Venetians were speculative and suspicious people, who retailed their dreams and their imaginations as authoritative news ; that they had spread this report from suspicion rather than from any information they had obtained ; and that, for himself, he was perfectly sure that no negotiations to the prejudice of the League or to our present projects were in progress."

Bassompierre left the Prince and proceeded to the Queen's apartments, where he found Créquy. Presently, a message came from Louis XIII summoning the two marshals to the Queen-Mother's cabinet, where they found the King in company with Marie de' Medici, Schomberg, and d'Herbault.¹ To their astonishment, the King informed them that he had just received a treaty which had been made with Spain, *without his knowledge*, by Du Fargis, and ordered d'Herbault to read it to them. This document stipulated that the sovereignty of the Valtellina was to be restored to the Grisons, but it was to be confined to a simple right of tribute, with a confirmation purely nominal of the magistrates whom the Valtelliners might appoint ; while the Catholic religion

¹ Raymond Phelipeaux, Seigneur d'Herbault. He was one of the Secretaries of State, and shared with Potier d'Acquerre and Loménie de la Ville-aux-Clercs the Department of Foreign Affairs.

was alone to be permitted in that country. The passes were to remain at the disposal of France, but the forts were to be surrendered to the Pope to be demolished. The Kings of France and Spain were to intervene to re-establish peace between Savoy and Genoa.

"We found it," says Bassompierre, "so badly conceived, so badly drafted and so contrary to reason, so disgraceful for France, so opposed to the interests of the League, and so damaging to the Grisons, that, although at first we were persuaded that it had been made by order of the King, but that he wished, in order to appease his allies, to appear to know nothing about it, we finally believed that it had been concluded contrary to his orders. And this obliged us to dissuade the King from accepting and ratifying it."

Louis XIII told the three marshals¹ and d'Herbault to go on the following morning to the Petit-Luxembourg and confer with Richelieu, and to return with the Cardinal in the afternoon to the Queen-Mother's cabinet, where a meeting of the Council was to be held. Meanwhile, they were to say nothing about the matter to the Prince de Piedmont.

Bassompierre tells us that "never was he more provoked to speak against anything than against this infamous treaty, and that "his mind was so excited, that he was more than two hours in bed without being able to get to sleep, projecting a number of reasons which he wished to lay before the Council on the morrow against this affair." But, when he rose in the morning, he reflected that perhaps, notwithstanding the King's protestations to the contrary, he might have given authority to Du Fargis to sign the treaty, under the influence of the Queen-Mother, "who wished to make peace between her children,"² or of the cardinal, "who, seeing troubles increasing within the State, wished to make peace outside

¹ Schomberg had been created a marshal of France in 1625.

² Between Louis XIII and her son-in-law Philip IV.

it," and that, if they intended to ratify it, he would be only injuring himself to no purpose by denouncing it too warmly. He therefore decided to be on his guard and to watch carefully which way the wind was blowing ; and when he went to see Richelieu, he " listened more than he spoke." He did wisely, for " the Cardinal was very cautious and opened his mind but little, blaming only the levity, precipitation, and want of judgment shown by Du Fargis, who, he said, merited capital punishment for having concluded an affair of such consequence without instructions from the King." It was the same at the Council, where " he perceived that everyone was more concerned to blame the workman than to demolish the work, and to discuss the means by which the treaty might be amended than to propose to disavow or break it." This removed any doubt that he might have had that the Government desired peace with Spain, and that Du Fargis, though he had not obtained the terms desired, had been empowered to treat for it. He therefore begged the King to excuse him from expressing an opinion, and withdrew, as, being an honest man, he refused to associate himself with a treaty whose existence Richelieu had only the previous evening authorised him to deny.

Richelieu, both at the time and afterwards, declared positively that this peace was not of his making. This, in a sense, is true. It was Père Bérulle, of the Oratory, who had some time before become the *directeur* of the Queen-Mother's conscience, and the Spanish faction to whom the credit—or rather discredit—of it belonged. It was they who had instigated Du Fargis to begin negotiations with the Court of Madrid, and it was the hope of striking a better bargain with this irresponsible diplomatist that had caused Philip suddenly to revoke the powers which he had given to Mirabello, his Ambassador in France. But when the treaty, which had been signed on New Year's Day, 1626, reached Paris in the middle of January, Du Fargis was not recalled or disavowed. The matter was



FRANCOIS SEIGNEVR DE BASSOM

cet houaillier des Ordres du Roy Colone Grâ
pierre et de Dame Louyse de Paquier sa femme. Fils
des Suisses Fils de Christophe Baron de Bassom
Fut hongrë de tres beaux émpl
pys en la guerre et aux Ambassadez joruz le Règne de Louis XIII. Il receut des bleuures au bras de Ret
heli commandé par le Due de Guise 1617. et la même année fut envoié Ambassadeur extraord. en Espanne
A Greda le Roy a la destitutio du Pent de ce 1620. Servit dignement contre les Religionnaires et fut l'un
des Comandans au siège de S'Jean d'Angely 1621. et a celuy de Monlhurt. A la destitutio de Soubise en
l'île de Re et a l'attaque de Poyan. Pris l'arnau et autres places, puis ayant bien fait au siège de Mont
pelier S.M. l'honorâ du Baillon de Mar. de France 1622. Fut envoié Amb. extraord. en Angleterre
1623. en a son retour le Roy le fit son Lieut'ant au siège de la Rochelle au quartier de Laten jusqu
es a sa mort 1627. Il commanda aussi l'armée de S.M. lors les seuls ordres au pas de Suzé et a la con
quête de S'ouze 1629. Mais e couru de toutes ces prosperitez fut arresté par la Salouine au Carr. de
la Roche, qui le fit déloyer et mettre dans la Bastille 1630. où il rie fût quen 1642 apres la mo
rt de son Ministre par l'ordre du Roi et trois annies apres mourut subitement en la 5^e annie, réarrete en
l'lement pour ses belles qualitez, et avec beaucoup de justice quil éplacé dans ces illustres
son henni que Galon de Chalot marqué aillez le plus quil faisoit des grande hommes, puis qu'il
conforoit leurs mortuaires avec leurs éloges. Il épousa Marie Charlotte de Balfac son Anna es enflam
fut le plus Magnifique

PIERRE Marquis d'Harouel Marechal de Fran

des Suisses Fils de Christophe Baron de Bassom
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Apans chez Daret avec privil. du Roy 1652. A pris chez C. Baydeuin

FRANCOIS, SEIGNEUR DE BASSOMPIERRE, MARQUIS D'HAROUEL.

From a contemporary print.

kept a profound secret, and instructions were sent to the Ambassador to press for certain amendments. New articles were signed by Du Fargis at the beginning of March, and it was these which were now under discussion. The treaty, with some further modifications, was finally signed at Monzon on May 2.

If therefore this peace, which, to all appearance, reversed Richelieu's whole policy, was not of the Cardinal's making, he accepted and adopted it, with cynical contempt for the allies of France, Venice, Savoy, and the Grisons, who found themselves treated, not as confederates but as vassals, whose interests might be dealt with without the necessity of consulting them. Richelieu's excuse was that Charles Emmanuel would undoubtedly have insisted on the negotiations being broken off had he been informed of them.

The astonishment and indignation in London, Venice, Turin, and among the Grisons was extreme. The Venetians and the Grisons had too much need of France not to accept the explanations which Richelieu offered them ; but Charles Emmanuel, deceived in his ambitious hopes at the moment when he believed that they were about to be realised, conceived against the Cardinal the most bitter resentment. As for Buckingham, who had brought strong pressure to bear on the Huguenots to induce them to make peace, and was pluming himself on having thereby deprived France of any excuse for not vigorously prosecuting the war against Spain, he felt himself cheated and outwitted, and his vanity was as deeply wounded as was the Duke of Savoy's ambition.

Imperative motives had, however, imposed peace upon Richelieu. For the security of the Crown and the eventual liberty of Europe, it was absolutely necessary for him to extricate himself from foreign embarrassments with the least possible delay. He was convinced, as Bassompierre suspected, that obstacles within the State must be overcome before France could actively embark

upon enterprises outside it. Any really effective action against the House of Austria was, in his judgment, impossible, so long as the Huguenots remained a great faction, ready to profit by the embarrassments of the Government to hinder its operations, and while the grandes, on their side, were thwarting openly, or by secret intrigues, the royal authority.

For the conspiracies of the Court had not contributed less than the revolt of the Huguenots to determine him to make peace. A formidable cabal threatened his power and even his life.

As the favour of Richelieu increased, so did the aristocratic opposition to him gather strength. The grandes of the kingdom were indignant that a Minister should presume to govern in the general interest, instead of in their own, and made ready to draw the sword, if need be, against him as they had against Concini and Luynes. Conspiracy and revolt were in the air, and men and women caballed incessantly, "persuaded that the Cardinal was not a dangerous enemy and that they had nothing to fear from him."

For some time past Marie de' Medici had been anxious for the marriage of her younger son, Gaston, *Duc d'Anjou*, officially styled *Monsieur*, now in his eighteenth year, a lively, frivolous, dissipated youth, who, when the shades of evening fell, loved nothing better than to escape from the Louvre and scour the streets in search of adventure. Gaston presented a striking contrast to his austere, melancholy, and parsimonious brother, but since his vices were such as the courtiers loved and profited by, he was as popular with them as the King was the reverse; and it was an open secret that the majority of them looked forward with pleasurable anticipation to the not unlikely event of his succession to the throne.

The lady whom the Queen-Mother had chosen as a wife for Gaston was Marie de Bourbon, *Mlle. de*

Montpensier, only daughter of the late Duc de Bourbon-Montpensier, a lively and attractive princess and the richest heiress in France. Richelieu, after some hesitation, decided for the match, influenced, it would seem, by the reflection that, if *Monsieur* were ever so ill-advised as to raise the standard of revolt, there would be no foreign alliance for him to rely upon. Louis XIII expressed his approval, and nothing remained but to obtain the consent of Gaston.

And then the trouble began.

For various reasons the idea of the marriage was regarded with disapproval by quite a number of illustrious persons. The young Comte de Soissons, who wanted Mlle. de Montpensier for himself, was furiously indignant, declaring that Marie de' Medici had promised him the lady's hand during her regency; and his mother, the ambitious and meddlesome Anne de Montafé, supported his pretensions. The Condés naturally desired to see *Monsieur* remain unmarried, since he alone stood before them in the line of succession. The younger branches of the House of Guise viewed with jealousy the increased importance which the head of their family, who had married the widowed Duchesse de Montpensier, would derive from the elevation of his step-daughter. Finally, Anne of Austria, who had no children, saw in this alliance the last blow to her hopes, for, if her sister-in-law became a mother, she would efface her altogether. She accordingly determined "to do everything she could to stop the marriage,"¹ and applied to her customary confidante, the Duchesse de Chevreuse, for her advice and co-operation. That lady, the most inveterate and dangerous *intrigante* of her time, responded with all the energy of her character

¹ Madame de Molteville, *Mémoires*: "The Queen did me the honour to tell me that she did everything she could to stop the marriage of *Monsieur* . . . because she believed that this marriage, which the Queen-Mother desired, was altogether contrary to her interests, being assured that, if the princess were to have children, she would no longer enjoy any consideration."

and forthwith began to pull the strings in every direction. Such was the origin of an affair which began by being merely an intrigue of the Court, and which ended by becoming, according to the saying of Richelieu, “one of the most frightful conspiracies of which histories have made mention.”

The object of Anne of Austria and Madame de Chevreuse was to persuade *Monsieur* to refuse the bride who was offered him. Well, *Monsieur* had all his life his favourites for masters, and to persuade him it was necessary to gain a man who at that time was in possession of his confidence, and almost of his person, his *gouverneur*, the *Surintendant* of his Household, and the chief of his Council—the Maréchal d’Ornano. It was therefore to him that they addressed themselves.

Ornano had, as we have mentioned elsewhere, been disgraced and imprisoned by La Vieuville, on a well-founded charge of developing ambition in his pupil. But, when Richelieu succeeded to the control of affairs, he was set at liberty, and restored to his offices, and at the beginning of 1626 created a marshal of France, in the hope of inducing him to lend his support to the Montpensier marriage. Richelieu, then, might reasonably have expected some gratitude from Ornano; but, unfortunately, gratitude found no place in the Corsican’s nature. Bold and ambitious, he urged without ceasing the vain and foolish young prince over whom he had acquired so great an ascendancy to assert his claims to the place in the State to which his birth entitled him. When *Monsieur* demanded a place in the Council, he demanded to accompany him, with the rank and title of Secretary of State; and the refusal he received had greatly incensed him against Richelieu, and determined him to seek some means of compassing the overthrow of the Minister who had thwarted his ambition.

Madame de Chevreuse had long been on friendly terms with Ornano, who had owed his fortune largely to the good

offices of her first husband ; and she was aware of the grudge which he cherished against Richelieu. She therefore anticipated little difficulty in gaining him over to the Queen's cause ; but, in order to leave nothing to chance, she summoned to her aid the Princesse de Condé, of whom Ornano, undaunted by the fact that he was " the ugliest man possible to imagine," was a *soupirant*. The blandishments of *Madame la Princesse* served to dissipate any lingering scruples which the marshal might have entertained ; he declared himself a devoted servant of the Queen, and promised to do everything in his power to dissuade *Monsieur* from making Mlle. de Montpensier his wife.

In this task he did not lack coadjutors, and every day the " *Conspiration des Dames*," as the anti-marriage cabal was called, gathered fresh adherents. The Dowager-Comtesse de Soissons was beloved by Alexandre de Vendôme, Grand Prior of France, the younger of Henri IV's two sons by Gabrielle d'Estrées, an unquiet spirit, with a positive passion for mischievous intrigue, who nursed a grudge of his own against Richelieu. She had no difficulty in persuading him to join the conspiracy, and the Grand Prior, in his turn and with equal facility, secured the adhesion of his elder brother, the Duc de Vendôme. The gay and foolhardy young courtiers—Du Lude, La Rivière, Louvigny, Puylaurens, Bois-d'Annemetz and others—who surrounded *Monsieur*, espoused the same cause, either from dislike of the Cardinal, or from the hope that a breach between their patron and the King might redound to their advantage.

Every imaginable argument was employed to dissuade *Monsieur* from a marriage which threatened so many interests. They appealed in turn to his love of pleasure, his vanity, and his ambition. They pointed out that the joyous, irresponsible life which he had led hitherto would no longer be possible when he had taken unto himself a wife, since the King would then insist on his conducting

himself with decorum. They deplored the docility which gave him the air of being a child in the hands of his mother, his brother, and the Cardinal, and urged him to assert his independence by refusing to allow a wife to be chosen for him. They reminded him that, although Mlle. de Montpensier was undoubtedly a great heiress, she was one of his brother's subjects, and that in marrying her he would fall into greater subjection than ever to the King's authority ; and they dangled before his eyes the prospect of a brilliant foreign alliance, such as that with the Infanta Maria Anna, formerly the betrothed of Charles I.

The Duchesse de Chevreuse was indefatigable in her efforts to secure recruits for the cause, and made use of all her charms to overcome their scruples. She was but too successful.

There was at this time in the King's Household, and very near his Majesty's person, in virtue of his office as Master of the Wardrobe, a young noble of twenty-seven, Henri de Talleyrand, Comte de Chalais, a member of an ancient sovereign house of Périgord and, through his mother, a grandson of the Maréchal de Montluc, author of the celebrated *Commentaries* to which Henri IV gave the name of "The Soldier's Bible." "M. de Chalais," writes Fontenay-Mareuil, "was young, well-made, very adroit at all manly exercises, but, above all, very agreeable, which rendered him a favourite with the ladies, who ruined him." Brave to rashness, he had distinguished himself on both the field of battle and that of honour, and a duel he had fought with the Comte de Pontgibault, in which the latter had been killed, was long talked of. Chalais was so fortunate as to be a favourite of both the King and his brother, which would make his support of peculiar value to the cabal, since he would be able to add his persuasions to theirs to induce *Monsieur* to refuse the hand of Mlle. de Montpensier, and, at the same time, serve their interests with the King by misleading him as to the intentions of the malcontents. It was

considered, however, very improbable that he could be persuaded to follow *Monsieur's* fortunes, since he was known to "ambition" the post of Colonel of the Light Cavalry, and to have an excellent chance of securing it. But, unhappily for Chalais, there was something that he desired still more than the command of the Light Cavalry: he had been for some time past madly enamoured of Madame de Chevreuse, and when that siren, who had not as yet condescended to accept his devotion, began to show signs of relenting, it was all over with him; and, oblivious of everything but this fatal passion, the unfortunate young man allowed her to lead him whither she willed. The consequence was that, before he had fully realised his position, he found himself drawn into the very thick of the conspiracy which was to bring him to his doom.

Madame de Chevreuse and Ornano were the soul of this league, which was becoming extremely formidable, from the importance of the persons implicated and the far-reaching character of their schemes. For the coalition against the marriage of *Monsieur* was only the starting-point of a conspiracy which aimed at a complete change in the Government, and whose ramifications extended far beyond the borders of France. Several of the foreign ambassadors had entered it, and it was known and more or less approved in England, Spain, Holland, and Savoy. The conspirators were determined to demand for Gaston and Ornano the entry to the Council, and afterwards to insist on the disgrace of Richelieu. If they failed, it was their intention to persuade *Monsieur* to retire from Court, to take up arms and to appeal for foreign and Huguenot aid. In the event of revolt, the most resolute proposed that the Cardinal should be assassinated—a suggestion which was warmly supported by the Abbé Scaglia, the ambassador of Savoy.

Richelieu, though he had eyes and ears everywhere at his service, had not yet received more than vague warnings as to the designs of his enemies. However, these had been

sufficient for him to divine that some plot hostile to the existing order of things was in progress, and that *Monsieur* was concerned in it.

Immediately after Easter the Court quitted Paris for Fontainebleau. On the morrow of its arrival, *Monsieur* had an interview with the King, in which he declared that "it was a reproach and a shame to him that, being his Majesty's brother, he had neither share nor influence in affairs of State." He then demanded a seat in the Council and, at the same time, angrily declined the hand of Mlle. de Montpensier, on the ground that "a foreign alliance was necessary for his honour and prosperity." The King replied that he would consider his request and give him an answer in a few days. The young prince waited for three or four, and then sent Ornano to complain to Richelieu, but could get nothing more satisfactory from his Eminence than that he was "the humble servant of *Monsieur*." In high indignation, Gaston sought out his mother and announced his intention of quitting the Court. Marie soothed him by the promise that the Council should meet to consider his demands, and he agreed to await its decision.

Meanwhile, Louis XIII had consulted Richelieu, who did not fail to stimulate his resentment against the pretensions that had been suggested to his brother, and warned him that "in the matter of conspiracies, it was almost impossible to have mathematical proofs, and that when the circumstances were pressing, presumption ought to take their place." The arrest of Ornano was then decided upon.

On May 4 the King announced his intention of reviewing his Guards that afternoon in the Cour du Cheval Blanc, "to give pleasure to the Queens and Princesses," who were to witness the spectacle from the Grand Gallery of the Château. After dinner, Bassompierre, who was going to Paris for a day or two "to stop one of his nieces de Saint-Luc from becoming a nun," went to take leave

of the King, who suggested that he had better wait and see the review ; but the marshal, who was in a hurry to be gone, excused himself. Early on the following morning, however, he was awakened by the arrival of a gentleman named Bonnevaut, whom Louis had sent to inform him that he had caused Ornano to be arrested and to request him to return that day to Fontainebleau without fail.

With that dissimulation which he loved to display on such occasions, Louis XIII had invited Ornano to witness the review and treated him with unusual condescension. Afterwards, he had invited him to walk with him in the Cour du Cheval Blanc, and, as though by chance, pointed out to him the chamber where the Maréchal de Biron had been temporarily confined after his arrest in 1602. That night Ornano was himself arrested and conducted to the same apartment.

At the first news of the arrest of Ornano, which was brought to him just after he had retired for the night *Monsieur*, beside himself with indignation, hurriedly dressed and proceeded to the King's apartments to demand the immediate release of the marshal. He was told that his Majesty could not be disturbed, and the same answer awaited him when he went to the Queen-Mother.

On the morrow he went in search of the Ministers. The first whom he found was the Chancellor, d'Aligre, who, intimidated by the anger of the prince, assured him that he had nothing to do with the arrest of the marshal. But when he addressed himself to Richelieu and inquired furiously : " Is it you who have dared to give this counsel to the King ? " he was met with the laconic reply : " Yes, it is I." D'Aligre was promptly disgraced for his feebleness, and the Seals given to Marillac. Ornano was transferred to the Château of Vincennes, and his two brothers, his friend Chaudebonne and the Comte de Modène and Déageant were also arrested and conveyed to the Bastille.

On his return to Fontainebleau, Bassompierre went to visit *Monsieur*, even before seeing the King, "so much was he assured of the confidence which his Majesty reposed in him." He found the prince "very exasperated and influenced by sundry evil minds," and took the liberty of speaking to him very frankly indeed. Gaston appeared to take the lecture in good part, and, by the King's wish, Bassompierre continued his visits and his admonitions. But, after three or four days, he learned from Marie de' Medici that *Monsieur* suspected that it was intended to give him the marshal as his *gouverneur* in place of the captive Ornano, and had said that he did not desire to have one. Upon which Bassompierre ceased his visits, "wishing to show by keeping away from him that he by no means aspired to that charge." This was most unfortunate, as it left the young prince entirely under the influence of the "evil minds" of which the marshal speaks.

The unexpected arrest of Ornano had fallen like a thunderbolt on the heads of the conspirators. They foresaw that if the marshal were brought to trial, not only would their designs be discovered, but even their persons be in danger, since he was not the kind of man who could be trusted to prefer death to dishonour. They therefore urged *Monsieur* to make every endeavour to procure the release of his *gouverneur*, and, if he failed, as they fully expected he would do, to take one of two courses: the first was to leave the Court, retire into some fortified place and call his supporters to arms; the second, to get rid of the Cardinal.

As Louis XIII and Richelieu refused to hear of the release of Ornano, and Gaston, although the Comte de Soissons offered to furnish him with a very large sum of money if he would retire from Court and declare war, hesitated to take so irrevocable a step, the Grand Prieur de Vendôme, Chalais and others, prevailed upon him to choose the second of these alternatives.

Richelieu was staying at the Château of Fleury, a

country-seat of his, situated about two leagues from Fontainebleau. Gaston, feigning a desire to be reconciled to him, was to invite himself to dinner and arrive accompanied by a strong party of his friends. What was to follow is disputed. Most writers, including Bassompierre,¹ assert that it was the intention of the conspirators to demand the release of Ornano, and, if that were refused, to assassinate their host out of hand ; and Richelieu always maintained that his own death would have been followed by the assassination or dethronement of the King. A more sober version of the affair attributes to the conspirators no more sinister design than that of making the Cardinal their prisoner and subsequently exchanging him for Ornano, though, even if this be correct, it might well have had a tragic sequel. Whatever the object of the plot, there can be no possible doubt that Madame de Chevreuse was privy to it, if not its prime instigator ; and it can therefore be regarded as a singular illustration of the irony of Fate that the indiscretion of the most devoted of her admirers should have been the means of bringing it to naught.

Chalais had a friend, the Commandeur de Valençay, a younger brother of that Valençay whose carelessness after the capture of the ridge of Saint-Denis at Montpellier had entailed so much loss of life, and to this gentleman, on the eve of the execution of the plot, he was imprudent enough to disclose it. He believed that he would find in him a sympathetic listener, since, though he had not yet declared himself, he had always appeared well disposed towards the cause. But, to his consternation, Valençay, either from the hope of gaining the Cardinal's favour or from genuine disgust, professed the utmost horror and indignation ; “ reproached him with his treason, in that being one of his Majesty's own Household he dared to

¹“ A few days afterwards there was a report that a council had been held, which was attended by nine persons . . . at which it was resolved to go and kill the Cardinal at Fleury.”

make an attempt upon the person of his first Minister," and insisted that Chalais should forthwith accompany him to Fleury and warn Richelieu of the danger which threatened him. Chalais, in despair, obeyed, and assured the Cardinal that he had always abhorred the plot and resolved to denounce it. Richelieu believed, or affected to believe, him, and when he offered to reveal to his Eminence any further intrigues against him, accepted his services and promised to obtain for him the coveted post of Colonel of the Light Cavalry.

The Cardinal sent Valençay to Fontainebleau to inform Louis XIII and the Queen-Mother ; and the King at once despatched a troop of horse to Fleury for the protection of his Minister ; while Marie de' Medici sent the gentlemen of her Household. At dawn a number of Gaston's officers arrived at Fleury, ostensibly, to announce the approaching arrival of their master and to assist in preparing for his reception ; in reality, to serve as the advance-guard of the conspirators. His Eminence received them very courteously, expressed his sense of the honour which the prince proposed to do him, and then, ordering his coach, set out for Fontainebleau, accompanied by more than a hundred horse, " to escort his Royal Highness."

His Royal Highness was considerably astonished when the Cardinal presented himself at his *levée* that morning, and mildly reproached him with not having given him longer notice of the visit with which it was his intention to honour him. In order to avert suspicion as to his destination, *Monsieur* had announced his intention of hunting that day ; and, as Richelieu withdrew, after handing the prince his shirt—a duty which was always performed by the prelate or noble of the highest rank present—he remarked significantly : " *Monsieur*, you have not risen early enough this morning ; you will find that the quarry is no longer at home." Then Gaston knew that someone had betrayed him.

Thoroughly frightened, the pusillanimous prince passed from treachery and conspiracy to base submission, "with the levity of a selfish and thoughtless child, destitute of both moral sense and courage,"¹ and on May 31, in the presence of the King, the Queen-Mother and the Cardinal, he signed and swore on the Gospels to observe faithfully a compact drawn up by Richelieu, in which he engaged that "no counsel should ever be proposed or submitted to him by anyone whomsoever of which he would not advise his Majesty; that he would not keep silence concerning even the most trifling words that were spoken to him with the object of arousing his resentment against the King and his advisers, and that he would love and esteem those whom the King and the Queen-Mother loved."

Gaston had sworn to and signed everything that had been put before him, but, being as faithless as he was cowardly and selfish, he had not the remotest intention of executing his engagement. In fact, while swearing to inform his brother of everything contrary to his service that might come to his knowledge, he said not a word of the great conspiracy which, from the foot of the throne, had extended over the whole kingdom and far beyond its borders; and, when he again found himself among his partisans, he disclosed nothing of what had just taken place, renewed all the promises which he had made them, and continued to preside over their deliberations.

Chalais likewise kept his counsel, and the conspirators appear to have entertained no suspicion that they had a traitor in their midst, and probably attributed the Fleury fiasco to some vague warning furnished the Cardinal by one or other of the many secret agents whom he had in his pay. Had Chalais promptly avowed his enforced betrayal of their designs, they would certainly have proceeded with a great deal more caution, even if they

¹ Henri Martin.

had not decided to abandon the enterprise altogether. But, for a while, he appears to have been of opinion that his wisest course was to say nothing to his friends, and to keep, at least to some extent, his promise to report any fresh developments to the Cardinal ; and when at length his secret was forced from him by the address of Madame de Chevreuse and he was involved anew in the conspiracy, its leaders were already hopelessly compromised.

Whether by Chalais or by one of his secret agents, Richelieu's attention was directed to the Duc de Vendôme, whose movements he caused to be closely watched. Vendôme had resolved to offer *Monsieur* an asylum in his government of Brittany, and the Cardinal ascertained that he was secretly preparing for war, and that he was in communication with the authorities of La Rochelle. Recognising the importance of stifling at its birth the insurrection in a great province so close to La Rochelle and so exposed to an English invasion, he persuaded the King to proceed thither in person to re-establish his threatened authority. But, since he was doubtful if his Majesty could be brought to consent to the arrest of his half-brothers, the duke and Grand Prior, he resolved to ascertain how far he was prepared to support him, and accordingly requested permission to retire, on the ground of failing health. Louis declined his resignation in a letter which was equivalent to an oath of fidelity from the King to his Minister, and concluded with these words : “ Be assured that I shall never change, and that, whoever may attack you, you shall have me for second.”

Armed with this promise, Richelieu no longer hesitated to represent to the King the necessity of arresting the natural sons of Henri IV, and Louis at once assented. On learning of the approach of the Court, the Duc de Vendôme, who was at Nantes, became very uneasy ; but since he could not abstain from paying his homage to his sovereign without practically proclaiming himself a rebel, he charged his brother the Grand Prior to obtain an

assurance of safety from the King. "I give you my word," said Louis, "that he will come to no more harm than you." Deceived by this gross equivocation, the duke joined the Court at Blois, where it had arrived on June 6, and was very graciously received. But, two days later, both he and his brother were arrested in their beds by Du Hallier, Captain of the Guards, and conducted to the Château of Amboise, where they were very strictly guarded (June 12).

It would appear that, at this juncture, Richelieu was very far from being aware of the wide range of the conspiracy or of all its chiefs; otherwise, he would scarcely have left the Comte de Soissons behind in Paris to command in the name of the King, or have allowed *Monsieur* to remain in the capital, subject to all the influences that were being brought to bear upon him to induce him to raise the standard of revolt. However, two or three days after the arrest of the Vendômes, the King received warning that Soissons was meditating the abduction of Mlle. de Montpensier, who had also remained in Paris, upon which he sent Fontenay-Mareuil in all haste to Paris to bring the young lady to the Court, and orders to Bassompierre, Bellegarde, and d'Effiat to accompany them, with as many of their attendants as they could bring. Bassompierre, who was just starting for Blois, had sent all his suite on in advance, but the other two nobles were able to supply a sufficiently-strong guard, under whose escort Mlle. de Montpensier left Paris with the Duchesse de Guise.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Alarm of the conspirators at the arrest of the Vendômes—Chalais, at the instigation of Madame de Chevreuse, urges *Monsieur* to take flight and throw himself into a fortress—*Monsieur* and Chalais join the Court at Blois—The Comte de Louvigny betrays the latter to the Cardinal—Chalais is arrested at Nantes—Despicable conduct of *Monsieur*—Chalais, persuaded by Richelieu that Madame de Chevreuse is unfaithful to him, makes the gravest accusation against her, in the hope of saving his life—He is, nevertheless, condemned to death—He withdraws his accusations against Madame de Chevreuse—His barbarous execution—Death of the Maréchal d'Ornano—Marriage of *Monsieur*—Bassompierre declines the post of *Surintendant* of *Monsieur's* Household—Indignation of Louis XIII against Anne of Austria—Public humiliation inflicted upon the Queen—Banishment of Madame de Chevreuse—Bassompierre nominated Ambassador Extraordinary to England—Differences between Charles I and Henrietta over the question of the young Queen's French attendants—The Tyburn pilgrimage—Expulsion of the French attendants from England—Resentment of the Court of France.

THE news of the arrest of the Vendômes, following upon that of Ornano and the miscarriage of the Fleury affair, had filled the conspirators with dismay. They feared the effect of these repeated reverses upon the timid and vacillating mind of *Monsieur*, who, deprived of both the marshal and the Grand Prior, the two persons who had exercised the most influence over him, would be more difficult to decide than ever; and the less resolute began to entertain serious doubts as to the wisdom of proceeding with the enterprise. Madame de Chevreuse, however, refused to be discouraged. She had surprised Chalais's secret, won him back to the cause and compelled him to commit himself more deeply than ever, and she believed that she had, in the influence the young man possessed over *Monsieur*, a means which, if well employed, might re-establish everything. She proceeded to exploit it with her usual audacity and address, and, spurred on by his

passion for the beautiful duchess, Chalais lost no occasion of urging the prince to take flight and to throw himself into some fortified place. Gaston, however, could not make up his mind to this course, and, though nearly persuaded, he was still wavering, when orders came from the King to join him at Blois.

Monsieur left Paris, accompanied by Chalais and two of his young favourites, Puylaurens and Bois d'Anne-metz, the latter of whom has left us an interesting, though not altogether reliable, account of the conspiracy in which he was engaged.¹ They united their entreaties to those of Chalais, and by the time the party reached Blois, *Monsieur* would appear to have at last decided to follow the counsels which had been so long tendered to him in vain. It was then agreed that Gaston should write to d'Épernon inviting him to declare, in his favour, and that Chalais should despatch one of his friends, named La Loubère, to the Marquis de la Valette, d'Épernon's eldest son, who commanded in Metz, requesting him to receive the prince in that fortress.

While Chalais was labouring thus to merit the favours of Madame de Chevreuse, whom he had the happiness of seeing again when he joined the Court at Blois, to lull the suspicions of Richelieu he had continued to profess the greatest devotion to his interests and gave him sometimes useful information. It is not surprising that this double game should have aroused the suspicion of some of his allies, and the author of the *Mémoires d'un favori* accuses him of desiring to safeguard himself whichever side was ultimately victorious. There can be no doubt, however, that Madame de Chevreuse knew the secret of Chalais's communications with the Cardinal, and that he was acting with her full approval.

It was a dangerous game to play for long with a person so vigilant and penetrating as Richelieu. The reports

¹ *Mémoires d'un favori du duc d'Orléans. Archives curieuses de l'histoire de France. Tome III.*

which daily reached the Cardinal from his secret agents all tended to show that *Monsieur* had grossly violated the solemn pledge that he had given at Fontainebleau, and that want of courage alone prevented him from throwing aside the mask ; and he found it difficult to reconcile Chalais's assurances of devotion to himself with those midnight visits *en robe de chambre* lasting two or three hours which his spies informed him the count was in the habit of paying to Gaston's apartments. Already he was more than half-convinced that the young man was playing him false, when an act of shameful treachery settled the question.

On June 27 the Court left Blois for Tours, from which town Chalais despatched La Loubère to Metz.

“ This La Loubère,” writes Bassompierre, “ came to take leave of the Comte de Louvigny,¹ in whose service he had been, and, knowing him to be an intimate friend of Chalais, did not hesitate to tell him where he was going and with what object. From Tours the King journeyed along the River Loire to Saumur, and on the way Louvigny had some dispute with M. de Candale,² with whom he was not on good terms, owing to some *amourettes*.³ However, this passed without any disturbance. On the evening we arrived at Saumur, Chalais and Bouteville⁴ came to dine with me, and begged me to reprimand Louvigny, which I did in their presence ; and the others told him that he must take care not to have any quarrel with M. de Candale, if he did not wish to lose their friendship, because they were bound to M. de Candale by particular obligations. He, on the contrary, while going on the morrow from Saumur to the Ponts-de-Cé, picked a quarrel with M. de Candale, and then all those whom he thought his friends left him to offer their services to M. de

¹ Roger de Gramont, Comte de Louvigny, second son of Antoine, Comte de Gramont. He was killed in a duel on March 18, 1629.

² The Comte de Candale was the younger son of d'Épernon and brother of the Marquis de la Valette.

³ According to Bassompierre, they were both in love with the Duchesse de Rohan.

⁴ François de Montmorency, Seigneur de Bouteville. He was beheaded in 1627. See p. 505 infra.

Candale. At which this malicious lad was so enraged, that on the morrow, when the King arrived at Ancenis,¹ he requested to speak to him, and informed him that La Loubère had gone to Metz by order of Chalais, and of several other things which he knew or which he invented.”²

Other writers assert that the real cause of Louvigny's treachery was that he had, like Chalais, fallen violently in love with Madame de Chevreuse and was jealous of the preference which that lady showed for the Master of the Wardrobe ; and it is therefore possible that the affair of which Bassompierre speaks was only a pretext. Anyway, a few days later Chalais was arrested at Nantes, where the Court had arrived on July 3, and imprisoned in a gloomy dungeon in the basement of one of the towers of the château.

“ *Monsieur* was very astonished at his arrest,” says Bassompierre, “ and his friends also, and they were on the point of taking their departure. But, at the same time, they received an answer from M. de la Valette at Metz to the effect that, if M. d'Épernon declared for him [*Monsieur*], he would declare for him likewise, but not otherwise. *Monsieur* wrote to M. d'Épernon, who sent the letter to the King.”

Gaston knew that the game was up. Richelieu requested the King to send for his brother, and succeeded in reducing that miserable prince to a condition of such abject submission that, despicable as had been his conduct at Fontainebleau a few weeks earlier, he, on this occasion, far surpassed it and plunged into a veritable abyss of infamy.

Not only did he consent to the marriage against which he had so indignantly protested, but he furnished

¹ On July 2.

² Among the things which Louvigny appears to have invented was the accusation that Chalais meditated the death of the King, by scratching him on the neck with a poisoned pin when, as Master of the Wardrobe, he was adjusting his ruff.

the most damning evidence against the leaders of the conspiracy of which he was the chief. He revealed all the communications into which Ornano had entered with the discontented nobles and with foreign princes, undeterred by the knowledge that the unfortunate marshal, for whom he had professed so much zeal, was already awaiting his trial on a capital charge. He declared that it was the Grand Prieur de Vendôme, likewise in Richelieu's clutches, who had counselled him to go to Fleury and assassinate the Cardinal, if he refused to set Ornano at liberty. He denounced the Comte de Soissons, the Duc de Longueville, Soubise, and many others, some of whom had but a very remote connection with the conspiracy. And he gave so circumstantial an account of his relations with Chalais and of the persistent efforts the latter had made to push him into revolt, that he rendered it quite futile for that misguided young man to attempt any defence. Finally, he confessed that Anne of Austria had several times entreated him to refuse his consent to the marriage proposed to him, except on the condition that Ornano should be set at liberty, and declared that, more than two years before, Madame de Chevreuse had advised him to remain unmarried, promising that, in the event of the King's death, he should marry the Queen.

It was decided to bring Chalais to trial before one of those special commissions to which Richelieu henceforth assigned most State prosecutions, for greater certainty of result. It assembled at Nantes, under the presidency of the new Chancellor, Michel de Marillac, and no one doubted that Richelieu intended to make a terrible example of the Master of the Wardrobe.

The unfortunate young man comprehended this, and his courage failed him. He would have led the most forlorn of hopes or faced the most redoubtable of *bretteurs* cheerfully enough, but he shrank in terror from the shadow of the headsman's axe. With the scaffold before his eyes, he revealed himself as the most cowardly

of poltroons and rivalled in baseness even *Monsieur* himself.

But, while denouncing his accomplices, he, to the mortification of Richelieu, kept faith with Madame de Chevreuse, and neither before the commission, nor in the private examinations to which he was subjected, could anything compromising to the duchess be extracted from him. His passion for this woman who had lured him to his destruction was as potent as ever, and from his gloomy dungeon he addressed to her letters filled with extravagant expressions of adoration, which the lovers of those days were wont to employ, but which come strangely from a man menaced by a traitor's death.¹ Madame de Chevreuse, not unnaturally, refused to incriminate herself in writing, and though she sent, on more than one occasion, verbal messages to the prisoner, these do not appear to have reached him. Anyway, Richelieu, who was particularly anxious to secure evidence against the duchess, whom he knew to be one of his most dangerous enemies, contrived to persuade Chalais that she had forgotten her hapless admirer and was occupied with other love-affairs, and that she had not scrupled to save herself at his expense. Exasperated to the last degree against the woman who, he believed, had repaid his devotion by such base ingratitude, and in the delusive hope that further important revelations might induce the Cardinal to spare his life, the wretched Chalais was gradually led to make the gravest accusations against the duchess. It was all

¹ Here is a specimen : " If my complaints have moved with compassion the most insensible of hearts, when my sun failed to shine in the alleys dedicated to love, where will be those who do not share my tears in a prison into which the sun's rays can never enter, and in which my lot is so much the harder in that I am forbidden to make known to her my cruel martyrdom ? In this perplexity, I felicitate myself on having a master who makes me suffer only in body ; and murmur against the marvels of that sun whose absence is killing the soul, and brings about such a metamorphosis that I am no longer myself save in the persistence of adoring it ; and my eyes, which survive for that alone, are justly punished for their too great presumption by the shedding of more tears than ever love caused to flow."

useless. So soon as Richelieu judged that he had extracted from the prisoner all the information he could hope, the proceedings were hurried on, and on August 18 the court pronounced the inevitable sentence, and "declared Henri de Talleyrand, Sieur de Chalais, attainted and convicted of the crime of *lèse-majesté*"; for reparation whereof it condemned him to be taken by the executioner of the High Justice, and conducted, with bare head, to the Place de Bouffay of Nantes, and there, on a scaffold which should be erected for that purpose, to have his head struck off and placed on a pike on the Porte de Sauvetour, his body to be quartered and fastened to gibbets at the four principal avenues of the said town, and that, before execution, he should be subjected to torture for the revelation of his accomplices. The court further declared all his property forfeited to the King, his posterity ignoble and *roturière* and deprived of all the privileges of the nobility, and ordered his residences to be demolished and his woods cut down to within a man's height of the ground.

This barbarous sentence was modified by the King, who, "yielding to the very humble prayer of the Dame de Chalais, mother of the said Chalais, and to several of his faithful and affectionate subjects, to whom the said Chalais was related," remitted all that was uselessly cruel, and directed that, after decapitation, the body should be given to his mother for burial in holy ground. His Majesty also annulled the attainder.

Before going to execution, the condemned man withdrew all the accusations he had made against Madame de Chevreuse, declaring that "what he had written, he had written in the extremity of rage and by reason of an erroneous belief which he entertained that she had deceived him," and, after signing the recantation, he sent for his confessor and charged him to inform the King that everything he had said against the Queen and Madame de Chevreuse was false.

In the hope that the intercession of *Monsieur*, who had been shamed into making some belated efforts to induce the King to spare Chalais's life, and that the gain of a few days might mean his salvation, the friends of the condemned had bribed the executioner of Nantes to leave the town. Their intervention merely served to make the unhappy man's end the more cruel, for, instead of postponing the execution until the headsman of Nantes could be fetched, Richelieu sent for a criminal then lying under sentence of death in the prison of Nantes, who, on the promise that he should be accorded his life, undertook to replace him. The improvised executioner bungled the business in the most shocking manner, and, according to one contemporary account, more than thirty blows were required before the head at last fell. Chalais's body was given to his mother, who caused it to be buried beneath the high altar in the Church of the Franciscans at Nantes.¹

Such was the end of Chalais and of the conspiracy which is sometimes known by his name, though it might with far more justice be called by that of Madame de Chevreuse, since it was she who had pulled the strings by which her luckless puppet of a lover danced to the scaffold. If it had succeeded, it would have changed the face of the realm, but its complete failure, which placed all its leaders, with the exception of the Comte de Soissons who had prudently taken to flight, in the power of Richelieu, immensely strengthened the government it was intended to overthrow. On September 2 the Maréchal d'Ornano anticipated the executioner by dying in

¹ The horrible tortures inflicted on the condemned man are accounted for by the fact that the executioner of Nantes had hidden or taken away his axe, and that his substitute was obliged to make use of unsuitable weapons: "They brought from the prisons of the town two men destined for the gibbet, one of whom played the part of executioner, while the other served as his assistant. But the former was so clumsy that, besides two blows with a Swiss sword, which had been purchased on the spot, he gave him [Chalais] thirty-four with an adze such as carpenters use, and was obliged to turn the body round to finish the severing of the head, the victim exclaiming up to the twentieth blow: 'Jesus, Maria et Regina Coeli!'"

prison,¹ and, two and a half years later, the Grand Prior followed him to the grave. The Duc de Vendôme remained in captivity until 1630, when he was set at liberty, though his government of Brittany, which had made him so great a power for mischief, was never restored to him.

As for *Monsieur*, he was discharged in order that he might marry Mlle. de Montpensier. The marriage contract was signed on August 5, and the wedding celebrated the following day by the triumphant Richelieu.

At the conclusion of the betrothal ceremony, the King, addressing *Monsieur* before Bassompierre, said : " Brother, I tell you before the Maréchal de Bassompierre, who loves you well, and who is my good and faithful servant, that I have never in my life accomplished anything which has pleased me so much as your marriage." *Monsieur* then invited Bassompierre to walk with him in the garden which is on the bastion [of Nantes] and said to him : " Betstein,² you will see me now without fear, since I stand well with the King." He then proposed to Bassompierre that he should enter his service as *Surintendant* of his Household and chief of his council, as Ornano had been, and begged him to speak to the King and obtain his consent. The marshal, however, begged to be excused, foreseeing that such a position, though very honourable and lucrative, was likely to prove extremely embarrassing. " I answered," says he, " that if the King were to offer me 100,000 crowns a year to enter his service, I should decline, not because I should not deem it a great honour and that I have not an ardent desire to serve you, but because it would be necessary for

¹ There can be no possible doubt that, had the marshal lived a little longer, he would have shared the fate of Chalais. " I am infinitely vexed that the death of the Maréchal d'Ornano has forestalled the judgment of the court," wrote Richelieu to the King. " The justice of God wished to anticipate yours."

² Bassompierre appears to have been addressed frequently by Louis XIII and *Monsieur* by the German form of his name.

me to deceive one or the other of you, and I am not skilful in that."

Mlle. de Montpensier brought her husband a revenue of 350,000 livres and immense estates, amongst which was the sovereign principality of Dombes, and Louis XIII, on the advice of Richelieu, gave *Monsieur*, as the price of his honour and the lives of his friends, a rich appanage. He exchanged the duchy of Anjou for those of Orléans and Chartres and the county of Blois, with a revenue of 100,000 livres and pensions amounting to more than six times that sum.¹ Little wonder, then, that he should have received the news of the unfortunate Chalais's death with equanimity!²

The brother was pardoned, but the wife had transgressed beyond forgiveness. The King, already violently irritated against the Queen by her coquetry with Buckingham, was exasperated beyond measure at the part which she was reported to have played in this miserable affair. His jealous and suspicious nature easily persuaded him that there was some intrigue between her and *Monsieur*, not perhaps to hasten his demise, but to marry whenever that event should take place; and such remained his settled conviction until the end of his life.³ In the first transports of his wrath, he summoned his consort to appear before a special council, at which Richelieu and the Queen-Mother assisted. Instead of being accommodated with the *fauteuil* due to her royalty, Anne suffered the indignity of having to sit upon a folding-seat, as

¹ Enormous as were these revenues, the King was able to sequester them by a stroke of the pen, and Richelieu took care that *Monsieur* should not have in his hands a single fortified place. It was a wise precaution, since Gaston's first treason was to be followed by others.

² " *Monsieur* was playing cards when the news was brought to him. He did not interrupt his game, but went on with it, as though, instead of Chalais's death, he had heard of his deliverance."—*Mémoires d'un favori du duc d'Orléans*.

³ When Louis lay on his death-bed, the Queen swore, with tears in her eyes, that she had been innocent of any such intention. " In the state in which I am," was the reply, " I am obliged to pardon you, but I am not obliged to believe you."

though she had been a criminal, the while the King upbraided her with having conspired against his life, in order to have another husband. "The Queen," writes Madame de Motteville, "to whom innocence gave strength, incensed by the cruelty of the accusation, spoke with firmness and a generous boldness, and told him, as I have heard from her own lips, that she had too little to gain by the change to blacken her soul for so small a profit. Then, with the imperiousness of a princess of her birth, she reproached the Queen-Mother with the persecutions which she and the Cardinal de Richelieu were inflicting upon her."

Anne's boldness, and particularly the disdainful answer which she had given him, served only to exasperate the angry monarch still further, and he resolved to punish her by a public humiliation. Accordingly, an order was issued, signed by Louis and countersigned by the Cardinal, forbidding entry to the Queen's apartments to all nobles and gentlemen other than those attached to her Household, unless they paid their respects to her Majesty in the King's presence and entered and quitted her apartments in his suite. He also forbade the Queen to grant any private audience without informing the Queen-Mother or the Cardinal, and naming the person whom she proposed to receive and the object of the interview.

Madame de Chevreuse remained to be dealt with, and for a time it looked as though matters were likely to go hardly with her. Her husband, however, who was in high favour with Louis XIII, intervened and persuaded the King to be content with her banishment from the Court, promising to be answerable for her future conduct. She accordingly retired to the duke's château of Dampierre, near Rambouillet, where she was kept under close surveillance, all communication with the Queen being strictly forbidden her. She would appear, however, to have been so imprudent as to disobey this command; anyway, six months later she received orders to leave

France. Her request that she might be permitted to retire to England was refused, and she was obliged to seek an asylum at Nancy, with her husband's kinsman, Charles IV of Lorraine.

At the end of September of that year, Bassompierre was despatched on another important diplomatic mission, this time to England, where the differences between Charles I and Henrietta Maria over the thorny question of the Queen's French attendants had reached a crisis.

In the marriage treaty, signed on November 24, 1624, the French Government had succeeded in obtaining practically all that it had demanded, though when one reads the articles of this astonishing document, it is impossible to believe that James I, or Charles, when after his accession he confirmed them, ever intended that they should be carried out, or that they conceived it possible to do so.

The treaty stipulated that the free exercise of the Catholic religion should be permitted to Henrietta, and likewise to all the children who should be born of the marriage, who were to be brought up by their mother until they reached the age of thirteen. The Queen was to have a chapel in all the royal palaces, "and in every place of the King of Great Britain's dominions where he or she should reside." She was to have in her house twenty-eight priests and ecclesiastics, almoners and chaplains included, to serve in her chapel, and if there were any regular clergy amongst them, they should wear the habit of their Order. Her domestic establishment was to consist exclusively of French Catholics, chosen by the Very Christian King.

These terms, if decidedly obnoxious to British prejudice, were, with the exception of the exclusively French composition of the Queen's Household—a most startling innovation and one which was bound to lead to trouble—only what might have been expected if the King

of England chose for his wife a Catholic princess. But the treaty contained in addition private or secret articles, which, admitting as they did the right of a foreign power to meddle in domestic affairs, were unlikely to be tolerated for a moment by a self-respecting people. These secret articles stipulated :—

1. That the Catholics, as well ecclesiastical as temporal, imprisoned since the last proclamation which followed the breach with Spain, should all be set at liberty.
2. That the English Catholics should be no more searched after nor molested for their religion.
3. That the goods of the Catholics, as well ecclesiastical as temporal, that were seized since the aforementioned proclamation, should be restored.

The insertion of these secret articles in the marriage treaty is the more extraordinary, since, on his return from Spain, Charles had pledged his word, in response to a petition from the Commons, that, in the event of his marrying a Catholic princess, "no advantage to the recusants at home" should accrue from the match. He had therefore to choose between breaking faith either with Parliament and the nation or with France.

To aggravate the difficulty of the situation, Henrietta had been sent to England as though she were a missionary of the Propaganda going forth to fight her battle for God and the Church. Urban VIII had exhorted her to prove the guardian angel of the English Catholics and told her that the eyes of both worlds, earthly and spiritual, were upon her; while, on taking leave of her, Marie de' Medici had placed in her hands a lengthy epistle, purporting to contain her own final counsels and admonitions, though in all probability it was the work of her confessor Bérulle, in which she was enjoined to model her conduct upon that of her ancestor Saint-Louis, and, like him, to fight a good fight for the Christian [*i.e.*, Roman Catholic]

religion, in defence of which he exposed his life, dying faithful amongst infidels. The sequel leaves no doubt that the child—she was but fifteen—took to heart the lessons which she had received.

Charles I's dream of domestic happiness speedily vanished. On the road to London there was a warm dispute between the royal pair on the question of the precedence to be enjoyed by Madame de Saint-George, Henrietta's lady of the bedchamber, to whom the young Queen was tenderly attached; and this affair appears to have embittered the early days of their married life. Other troubles were not long in arriving, for Henrietta was impetuous and indiscreet, Charles punctilious and tactless.

After a very short stay in London, their Majesties, to escape the plague which was devastating the capital, removed to Hampton Court. A few days later, a deputation from the Privy Council waited upon the Queen to acquaint her with the regulations which the King desired should be observed in his Household, which were substantially the same as those which had been in force during the lifetime of his mother, Anne of Denmark.

Henrietta took umbrage at once. "I hope," she replied pettishly, "I shall have leave to order my house as I list myself." Charles attempted to argue the point with her in private, but the answer he received was so rude that he did not venture to transcribe it when a year later he sent a long account of his consort's misdoings to his ambassador in France, with the intention that it should be submitted to Marie de' Medici.

As time went on, matters grew worse. The Queen obstinately declined to make any attempt to learn the English language or to understand English customs, and appeared to regard herself as in a foreign land, where everyone was hostile to her. Even her almoner, the Bishop of Mende, a prelate in no way inclined to be over-conciliatory, was forced to admit that "it would be a

propos should the Queen show a greater degree of courtesy towards the King and the great dignitaries of State ; adding that to none, of what rank soever, did she pay so much as a compliment."

Unfortunate as was the attitude adopted by Henrietta, it must be allowed that she was not without cause for complaint. She had come to England in the full persuasion that her arrival was to inaugurate an era of liberation for the English Catholics, but scarcely had she set foot in the country than Charles proceeded to evade his engagements. Faced with the alternative of breaking his promise to his subjects or to the King of France, he attempted to find a way out of the difficulty by steering a middle course. He pardoned and set at liberty the priests who lay in prison, and allowed them to leave the country in the train of the French Ambassadors Extraordinary, Chevreuse and Ville-aux-Clercs, on the understanding that they would not attempt to return, which done, he announced to the Parliament that henceforth the laws against the Catholics would be put into execution.

This compromise satisfied neither party. The English, seeing so many priests suddenly emerge from prison, not unnaturally asked themselves whether the King was really sincere when he declared that the Penal Laws were to be enforced ; while the Queen and her ecclesiastical guides and counsellors were indignant that he should thus attempt to evade his pre-nuptial pledges, although, had they had the slightest acquaintance with the state of public feeling, they would have known that to execute them in full was impossible.

The difficulties of the religious situation were accentuated by the lamentable want of tact and patience displayed by both sides. The priests in Henrietta's suite, with the Bishop of Mende at their head, seemed to be eager for battle, nor was Charles inclined to meet them in a conciliatory spirit. The ecclesiastics were importunate to have the Queen's chapel at St. James's completed ;

but the King, according to a news-letter of the time, replied that, if her Majesty's closet were not large enough, they could say Mass in the great chamber ; that were it not wide enough, they might use the garden ; if that would not serve their turn, then the park was the fittest place. "So," adds the writer, "they wished themselves at home again." On one occasion, when their Majesties were dining together, there was an unseemly dispute between Henrietta's chaplain and the King's as to which of them should say grace. The Frenchman stole a march on his rival, upon which Charles rose, and taking the Queen by the hand, left the table, refusing to partake of meat thus irregularly blessed. On another, while they were staying at a country-house, Henrietta and some of her ladies passed, talking and laughing, through the hall where divine service was being held, and, to make matters worse, returned shortly afterwards and caused a fresh interruption.

As the months passed, it became daily more apparent that, so long as Henrietta's French attendants remained in England, there could be no hope of a good understanding between husband and wife. The Queen's ladies taught her to look upon the English of both sexes with distrust and dislike. Her priests fomented by every means in their power the indignation with which Charles's broken promises in regard to his Catholic subjects had inspired her, and encouraged her to make an ostentatious display of her devotion to the observances of her Church. When, on February 2, 1626, Charles's coronation took place, they persuaded her, not only to refuse to be crowned with him, but even to decline to assist at the ceremony, though a latticed place in the church had been made ready for her. Her absence involved that of Blainville, the French Ambassador, which was regarded as a serious affront to the sovereign to whom he was accredited, and did not serve to increase the cordiality between the two Courts.

When Henrietta was with her ladies she was as gay and light-hearted as might have been expected from one of her age and nation. Her ill-humour was reserved for her husband, in whose presence she gave herself the airs of a martyr. Charles's patience was rapidly becoming exhausted ; more than once he thought of "cashiering his Monsers," as he expressed it, of packing the whole company back to France ; but the marriage treaty protected them, and for a time he held his hand.

Fresh disputes soon arose. The Queen desired to nominate some of her French attendants to take charge of her jointure, to which Charles refused to consent. One night, after the royal pair were in bed, high words passed between them. "Take your lands to yourself," exclaimed the angry wife. "If I have no power to put whom I will into those places, I will have neither lands nor houses of you. Give me what you think fit by way of pension." Charles took refuge in his dignity. "Remember," said he, "to whom you speak. You ought not to use me so." The Queen declared that she was miserable ; she had no power to place servants, and business succeeded the worse for her recommendation. She would have him to know that she was not of that quality to be used so ill. She continued in this strain for some time, refusing to listen to her husband's explanations. "Then," wrote Charles afterwards, in giving an account of the scene to Carleton, for the information of the French Government, "I made her both hear me and end this discourse."

An incident which occurred at the end of June, 1626, brought matters to a climax.

One evening, after spending the greater part of the day in devotions in her chapel at St. James's, the Queen, with some of her French attendants, amongst whom appear to have been several priests, strolled out to breathe the fresh air in St. James's Park. From there they made their way into Hyde Park, and, by accident or design,

directed their steps towards Tyburn,¹ where stood the gallows on which so many of their co-religionists had died. What happened then is uncertain. Henrietta afterwards denied that she approached within fifty paces of the gallows-tree, but it is possible, as Bassompierre admitted in his speech before the Royal Commissioners appointed to discuss with him the question of the dismissal of the Queen's French attendants, that some words of prayer for the souls of the Catholics who had suffered there may have risen to her lips.

A week or two passed before the story of that evening walk reached Charles's ears, much exaggerated, as one may suppose, in its passage, through the mouths of men. The Queen of England, he was told, had been conducted on a pilgrimage to offer prayers to dead traitors who had suffered the just reward of their crimes.² The King's indignation knew no bounds, and, without apparently troubling to inquire into the truth of the matter, he forthwith resolved that whatever the marriage-treaty might say, those who were responsible for this scandal should no longer remain in England.

As, however, he felt that it would be advisable to do something to lessen the indignation with which the news of the expulsion of his wife's French attendants would certainly be received in France, he found a pretext for

¹ Tyburn Tree would appear to have stood on the spot which is now the junction of the Bayswater and Edgware Roads.

² "They [the Bishop of Mende and the other ecclesiastics of the Queen's Household] abused the influence which they had acquired over the tender and religious mind of her Majesty, so far as to lead her a long way on foot, through a park, the gate of which had been expressly ordered by the Count de Tilliers [Tillières] to be kept open, to go in devotion to a place (Tyburn), where it has been the custom to execute the most infamous malefactors and criminals of all sorts, exposed on the entrance to a high road ; an act, not only of shame and mockery towards the Queen, but of reproach and calumny of the King's predecessors of glorious memory, as accusing them of tyranny on having put to death innocent persons, whom these people look upon as martyrs, although, on the contrary, not one of them had been executed on account of religion, but for high treason."—Reply of the Commissioners of his Majesty the King of Great Britain, to Monsieur le Maréchal de Bassompierre, Ambassador Extraordinary from his Most Christian Majesty.

sending Carleton on a special mission to Louis XIII, in order that he might be at hand to explain matters ; but no sooner did he learn that his Ambassador had crossed the Channel than he proceeded to carry out his intentions.

On July 31 the King and Queen dined together at Whitehall. When they rose from table, Charles conducted his wife into his private apartments, where, having locked the door, he informed her that her attendants must return to France. Meanwhile, Lord Conway was informing the members of the Queen's Household that it was the King's command that they should remove forthwith to Somerset House—Henrietta's dower-palace—where they would learn his Majesty's pleasure. The Bishop of Mende expostulated, and the women “ howled and lamented as if they had been going to execution.” But the Yeomen of the Guard intervened, thrust them all out and locked the doors after them.

Charles's task was not so easy. No sooner did the Queen realise what was being done than she rushed to the window, in order to bid farewell to her departing attendants. The King attempted to draw her away, bidding her “ to be satisfied, since it must be so.” But Henrietta, who was in a violent passion, broke away from him, and since he prevented her from opening the window, contrived to dash the glass to pieces, in her determination to make her voice heard. Charles, it is said, dragged her back, with her hands bleeding from the energy with which she clung to the bars.

The next day Conway went to Somerset House and informed the indignant attendants of Henrietta that they must leave the country, with two or three exceptions, which had been made at the Queen's earnest entreaty. Presents to the amount of £22,000 were offered them, and they were told that if anything were owing to them, it should be discharged out of the Queen's dowry, which had not yet been paid, owing to a misunderstanding between the two Courts. On various pretexts, however, they

delayed their departure for several days, until at last Charles, thoroughly exasperated, wrote to Buckingham from Oaking as follows :

" Steenie,—I have received your letter by Dick Graeme. This is my answer : I command you to send all the French away to-morrow out of the town—if you can, by fair means, but stick not long in disputing ; otherwise, force them away, driving them away like so many wild beasts, until you have shipped them, and so the devil go with them. Let me hear of no answer, but of the performance of my command.

" And so I rest your faithful, constant, loving friend,
" C. R." ¹

The duke proceeded to give effect to his Majesty's orders, and next day despatched to Somerset House a number of coaches, carts, and barges for the conveyance of the Queen's retinue and their baggage. But the French with one voice declared their determination not to depart, saying that " they had not been discharged with the proper punctilios." Thereupon a body of heralds and trumpeters, accompanied by a strong detachment of the Yeomen of the Guard, were marched down to Somerset House. The heralds and trumpeters formally proclaimed the King's pleasure at the gates, after which the Yeomen advanced to execute it, their orders being, if the French continued refractory, " to thrust them all out head and shoulders." These drastic measures, however, were not resorted to, as, recognising that further resistance was useless, they departed that same tide, and were conducted to Dover, where they embarked for France so soon as the wind served.

Charles's high-handed action was, as might have been expected, deeply resented by the Court of France. " The King of England," says Bassompierre, " sent the millord Carleton to make the King and the Queen-Mother agree to what he had done. He was very badly received."

¹ The orthography of this letter is, of course, modernised.

Louis XIII told Carleton that his sister had been treated cruelly, and that he proposed to send an Ambassador of his own to England, in the person of the Maréchal de Bassompierre, to investigate the affair. When he had received his report, he would decide what action he would take in the matter ; and from this resolution Carleton was unable to move him.

On August 24 the Court left Nantes to return to Paris. Shortly after its arrival in the capital, Charles sent Walter Montague to France to offer his felicitations to the Royal family on the marriage of *Monsieur*. Louis XIII, however, refused to receive him, and sent orders to him " to make the best of his way back," and, at the same time, pressed Bassompierre to set out for England with as little delay as possible.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Bassompierre arrives in England—His journey to London—He is visited secretly by the Duke of Buckingham—He visits the duke in the same manner at York House—Charles I commands him to send Père de Sancy back to France—Singular history of this ecclesiastic—Refusal of Bassompierre—His first audience of Charles I and Henrietta Maria at Hampton Court—Firmness of Bassompierre on the question of Père de Sancy—He visits the Queen at Somerset House—His private audience of the King—He reproves the presumption of Buckingham—Admirable qualities displayed by Bassompierre in the difficult situation in which he is placed—He succeeds in effecting a reconciliation between the King and Queen—His able and eloquent speech before the Council—An agreement on the question of the Queen's French attendants is finally arrived at—Lord Mayor's Day three centuries ago—Bassompierre reconciles the Queen with Buckingham—Stormy scene between Charles I and Henrietta Maria at Whitehall—Bassompierre speaks his mind to the Queen—Intrigues of Père de Sancy—Peace is re-established—Magnificent fête at York House—Departure of Bassompierre from London—He is detained at Dover by bad weather—England and France on the verge of war—Buckingham decides to proceed to France on a special mission and proposes to accompany Bassompierre—Embarrassment of the latter—He visits the duke at Canterbury and persuades him to defer his visit—A disastrous Channel passage—Return of Bassompierre to Paris—Refusal of the Court of France to receive Buckingham—An English historian's appreciation of Bassompierre.

ON September 27 Bassompierre left Paris and proceeded to Richelieu's house at Pontoise, where he dined with the Cardinal and discussed with him, Marillac, Schomberg, and d'Herbault various matters relating to his mission. He slept that night at Beauvais and then proceeded slowly towards Boulogne, stopping to inspect the Swiss troops who were in garrison in the towns on his route. He reached Boulogne on October 1, where he found his suite awaiting him, and the governor, the Duc d'Aumont, gave a banquet in his honour; and on the following day embarked for England, and, the wind being favourable and the sea calm, accomplished the dreaded passage in safety and made Dover the same afternoon.

"I remained there until the morrow—the 3rd—in order to secure conveyances for my suite. On the next day—the 4th—I slept at Cantorberi [Canterbury]; the 5th at Sittimborne [Sittingbourne]; on Tuesday—the 6th—I went on to Rochester, where the King's great ships-of-war lie, and came to sleep at Gravesinde [Gravesend]. The sieur Louis Lucnar, the conductor of Ambassadors,¹ came to meet me with the Queen's barge, which she had sent me, and, on Wednesday—the 7th—I embarked on the Thames and passed by the warehouse of the East-India Company, and by Grennhuits [Greenwich], a house of the King,² near which the Earl of Dorset, Knight of the Garter, of the House of Sacfil,³ came to receive me on the part of the King, and having conducted me to the King's barge, brought me close to the Tower of London, where the King's carriages were awaiting me. These took me to my lodging, where the said Earl of Dorset took leave of me. I was neither lodged nor entertained at the King's expense,⁴ and they had even made a difficulty about sending this Earl of Dorset, according to the usual custom,

¹ Sir Lewis Lewkenor, Knight. In 1603 an office had been instituted, or rather revived, for the more solemn reception of the Ambassadors by the title of Master of the Ceremonies, with a salary of £200 per annum. Sir Lewis Lewkenor was the first holder of the post. The worthy knight's emoluments were not confined to his salary, for Stow tells us that when, in March, 1605, he was sent by the Lords of the Council to the foreign Ambassadors to contradict officially a report of James I's death which had been spread, the Spanish Ambassador was "ravished with a soddaine joy, and gave unto Sir Lewis Lewkner (*sic*) a very great chaigne of gold, of a large value."

² Greenwich Palace, on the site where now stands the Naval Hospital, had been a favourite residence of Henry VIII and Elizabeth, but the Stuarts appear to have resided there but little.

³ Sir Edward Sackville, fourth Earl of Dorset (1591-1652). He was one of the handsomest men of his time, and in 1613 had become notorious as the hero of a duel, fought on a piece of ground specially purchased for the purpose near Bergen-op-Zoom, in which he had killed Edward Bruce, second Lord Kinloss, and been himself severely wounded. He had been ambassador in France for a short time in 1621 and again in 1623.

⁴ It was customary for Ambassadors Extraordinary to be lodged and entertained at the expense of the sovereigns to whom they were accredited, and we have seen how splendidly Bassompierre was treated at Madrid. Why this practice was departed from on the present occasion was no doubt due to the ill-feeling existing between the two Courts and to the fact that his mission was an unwelcome one, and not to any motive of economy, for in 1610 the Ambassador sent to announce to James I the accession of Louis XIII had been lodged in Lambeth Palace and most lavishly entertained.

to receive me. However, this did not prevent me from being well lodged, furnished, and accommodated.¹ That same evening, after I had supped, word was brought to the Chevalier de Jars,² who had supped with me, that someone was asking for him. It was the Duke of Bocquinghem and Montagu, who had come alone to see me without torch-bearers, and begged him [Jars] to bring them into my chamber by some private door, which he did, and then came to fetch me. I was very astonished to see him [Buckingham] there, because I had understood that he was at Hampton Court with the King ; but he had come from there to see me. He made at first many complaints to me of France, and then also on the subject of certain persons ;³ to which I replied the best I could, and then spoke of the grievances which France had against

¹ It is singular that Bassompierre omits to mention where he lived during his stay in London. It might be supposed that it was at the house of the permanent Ambassador, the Marquis de Blainville, were it not that he states elsewhere that it was in a *maison de louage*. There was in those days no French Embassy in London, that is to say, a house purchased by the French Government for the accommodation of its representative, and the Ambassadors made their own arrangements. We do not know where Blainville lived, but his predecessor, Bassompierre's brother-in-law, the Comte de Tillières, rented for a time Hunsdon House, in the Blackfriars. It was during his tenancy of this house, in October, 1623, that a most terrible accident occurred. Some three hundred Catholics had assembled there one evening to hear Mass, when the floor of the room in which the service was being held gave way, with the result that a great number of them were killed or severely injured. The bodies of nearly fifty are said to have been afterwards buried in the garden. This disaster was called the Fatal Vespers. "The Protestants," observes Croker, "considered it as a judgment of Heaven ; the Roman Catholics as a treachery of the Protestants, both sides overlooking in the blindness of bigotry the weakness of an old floor and the weight of the inordinate number of persons crowding upon it."

² François de Rochechouart, Knight of Malta, known also under the name of the Commandeur de Jars, third son of François de Rochechouart, Seigneur de Jars, and Anne de Monceaux. He had been exiled from the Court of France at the time of the arrest of Ornano, and had come to England, where he had been well received.

³ Buckingham was much incensed against the Court of France, owing to its refusal to receive him as Ambassador Extraordinary in the autumn of the previous year, though what else he could have expected after his audacious attempt to make love to Anne of Austria is difficult to understand. He had also, it appears, a personal grievance against Richelieu upon a point which was then considered of great importance—the right to the title of *Monseigneur*. The Cardinal had addressed letters to *Monsieur* le Duc de Buckingham, and the omission of the *Monseigneur* had given mortal offence to Buckingham.

England. These he excused as well as he was able, and afterwards promised me all manner of assistance and friendship, and I also made him ample offers of my service. He requested me not to say that he had come to see me, because he had done so unknown to the King, which I did not believe.

“ On Thursday—the 8th—the Ambassador Contarini, of Venice, came to visit me, and at night I went to see the Duke of Buckingham in secret at his house called Iorchaus,¹ which was extremely fine, and so richly fitted up that I never saw one to equal it.² We parted very good friends.

“ Friday, the 9th (October). In the morning, the sieur Louis Lucnar [Sir Lewis Lewkenor] came to me, on behalf of the King, to command me to send back to France Père Sancy, of the Oratory, whom I had brought with me. This I absolutely refused, saying that he was my confessor, and that the King had no concern with my suite ; and that, if I were not agreeable to him, I would leave his kingdom and return to my master. A little while after the Duke of Bocquinguem and the Earls of Dorset and Salisberi³ came to dine with me, and I complained to them about this. After dinner the Earl of Montgomery⁴ Grand Chamberlain, came to visit me

¹ York House. It had belonged originally to Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk ; but in the reign of Mary, Heath, Archbishop of York, purchased it for the see. Whence the name which so perplexed Bassompierre. In the reign of James I, Matthews, Archbishop of York, disposed of it to the Crown, and after Lord Chancellors Egerton and Bacon had had it, probably as an official residence, it was granted to Buckingham, who converted it into a sumptuous palace.

² “ It does some credit to the taste at least of the English Court at that period,” observes Croker, “ that Bassompierre, himself a man of distinguished taste in decoration and furniture (he nearly ruined himself by fitting up that celebrated house at Chaillot, which his gaoler Richelieu used to borrow), and who had seen all the courts in Europe, should consider this as the finest and best fitted house he had ever seen.”

³ William Cecil, second Earl of Salisbury, son of Sir Robert Cecil, the first earl, and grandson of the great Lord Burleigh.

⁴ Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery, afterwards fourth Earl of Pembroke (1584-1650), Lord Chamberlain, second son of Henry, second Earl of Pembroke, by his celebrated wife, Mary Sidney, sister of Sir Philip Sidney. It was to him and his brother William, third Earl of Pembroke, that Heminge and Corleton dedicated the first folio of Shakespeare as “ to the most noted and incomparable pair of brothers, who having prosecuted these treffles [the immortal plays] and their authour living with so much favour, would use a like indulgence towards



CHARLES I.

After the picture by Van Dyck at Dresden.

and to press me, on the part of the King, to send away Père Sancy, to whom I returned the same answer as I had made Lucnar."

This Père de Sancy, whom Charles I was so anxious to drive from his dominions, even, as we shall see presently, going the length of threatening to refuse to receive Bassompierre in private audience until he had sent him away, was a most extraordinary personage. The younger son of Nicolas Harlay de Sancy, who had been Colonel-General of the Swiss and *Surintendant des Finances*¹ under Henri IV, he had taken Holy Orders and been provided with three fat abbeys and the bishopric of Lavaur. But, on the death of his elder brother, the Baron de Maule, he abandoned the cassock for the sword and served in several campaigns in Italy, Germany, and Flanders. About 1611 he was sent as Ambassador to Constantinople, where he remained for seven years and amassed a considerable fortune, by methods which were common enough amongst the diplomatists of those days, whose official salaries were quite insufficient to meet the heavy expenditure which such positions entailed. Part of this fortune Sancy spent in the acquisition of rare Oriental manuscripts, for he was a man of really remarkable learning, speaking fluently, it is said, modern Greek, Latin, Spanish, English, Italian, and German, reading Hebrew texts with ease, and having a wide acquaintance

them which they have done unto their parent." Herbert was a generous patron of Massinger and Vandyck as well as of Shakespeare, but, in other respects, a far from estimable person, though much of the abuse heaped upon him by contemporary writers is no doubt due to his desertion of the King's cause during the Great Rebellion. The charges that he was quarrelsome, dissolute, and wanting in physical courage would seem, however, to be only too well founded. His devotion to the sport of cock-fighting is recorded in the old lines:—

" The Herberts every Cockpitt Day
Doe carry away
The gold and glory of the day."

¹ He was at one time the owner of the famous Sancy diamond, which afterwards figured amongst the crown jewels of France, and later amongst those of Russia.

with mathematics, natural history, and chemistry. However, in 1618, some unusually scandalous abuse of his official position so enraged the Turkish Government, that it caused him to be, not only arrested, but sentenced to a hundred blows with the bastinado. The Court of France accepted the excuses of the Porte—Sancy himself seems to have been only too anxious for the matter to be hushed up—and recalled its Ambassador, who, on his return, resumed the cassock, entered the Congregation of the Oratoire and attached himself to the fortunes of Richelieu. In 1625 he was amongst the ecclesiastics who accompanied Henrietta Maria to England, where he rendered himself particularly odious to Charles I and his people by his ill-considered zeal. The King had insisted on his being sent back to France not long after his arrival, but, notwithstanding this, he now reappeared as chaplain to Bassompierre's embassy. This appointment, which could not be regarded as other than a direct affront to the English Court, had been made, it would seem, at the instance of Marie de' Medici, and against the advice of Bassompierre, who foresaw the embarrassments to which it was bound to give rise. However, since he had been obliged to bring Sancy to England, the dignity of his sovereign demanded that he should protect him, even at the risk of compromising the success of his mission.

After the Lord Chamberlain had taken his departure, Bassompierre received visits from the Danish Ambassador and the agent of the ex-King of Bohemia, the unfortunate Frederick V, Elector Palatine. In the evening Walter Montague supped with him, and the following night he entertained Edward Cecil, Viscount Wimbledon—which the marshal spells “Houemelton”—who, the previous year, had commanded the expedition against the coast of Spain, the failure of which had been mainly due to the gross incapacity which he had displayed. Edward Cecil was an old acquaintance of Bassompierre. He had met him for the first time when a lad in Italy, and again

when he visited England with Biron in 1601, upon which occasion, he tells us, Cecil had shown him much courtesy.

On the 11th Bassompierre had his first audience of the King :

“ The Earl of Carlisle came with the King’s coaches to convey me to Amptoncourt [Hampton Court] to have audience of the King. At Amptoncourt I was conducted to a room in which a beautiful collation was spread. The Duke of Bouquinguem came to introduce me to the audience, and told me that the King desired to know beforehand what I intended to say to him, and that he did not wish me to speak about any business to him, otherwise, he would not grant me an audience. I told him that the King should know what I had to say to him from my own mouth, and that it was not the custom to limit an Ambassador in the representations he had to make to the King to whom he was sent. He swore to me that the only reason which obliged him [the King] to that, and which made him insist upon it, was that he could not help putting himself into a passion in discussing the matters about which I had to speak to him, which would not be seemly in the Chair of State, in sight of the chief persons of the Kingdom, both men and women ; that the Queen his wife was close to him, who, incensed at the dismissal of her servants, might commit some extravagance and weep in the sight of everyone ; that, in short, he would not compromise himself in public, and that he was resolved to break up this audience and grant me one in private sooner than treat with me concerning any business before everyone. He [Buckingham] swore vehemently to me that he was telling me the truth, and that he had not been able to persuade the King to see me save on this condition ; and he begged of me to suggest some expedient, whereby I should place him under an obligation. I (who perceived that I was going to receive this affront, and that he was asking me to aid him with my counsel, in order to avoid the one and to insinuate myself more and more into his good graces by the other) told him that I could not in any manner whatsoever do anything but what was prescribed to me by the King my master ; but that, since, as my friend, he asked my counsel as to some expedient,

I told him that it depended on the King to give or to take away, to abridge or to lengthen, my audience in what manner he would, and that he might, after having permitted me to make my reverence, and received, with the King's letters [*i.e.*, his credentials], my first compliments, when I should come to open to him the occasion of my coming, interrupt me and say : 'Sir Ambassador, you are come from London, and you have to return thither ; it is late, and this matter requires a longer time than I could now give you. I shall send for you one of these days at an earlier hour, and we will confer about it at our leisure in a private audience. Meantime, I shall content myself with having seen you and heard news of the King my brother-in-law and the Queen my mother-in-law ; and I will not delay longer the impatience which the Queen my wife has to hear of them also from you.' Upon which I shall take leave of him to go and make my reverence to the Queen."

Buckingham appeared delighted with the way out of the difficulty which the resourceful Bassompierre had suggested :—

"After I had said this, the duke embraced me and said : 'You know more about these things than we do. I offered you my assistance in the affairs you are come to negotiate ; but now I recall the promise I gave you, for you can do very well without me.' And so left me, laughing, to go and acquaint the King with the expedient I had proposed, which he accepted and punctually observed.

"The duke returned to introduce me to the audience, and the Earl of Carlisle walked behind him. I found the King on a stage raised ten steps, the Queen and he seated in two chairs, who rose at the first reverence I made on entering. The company was magnificent and the order exquisite. I made my compliment to the King and handed him my letters, and, after having said my words of civility, proceeded to those of business. He interrupted me in the same form as I had proposed to the duke. I then saw the Queen, to whom I said little, because she told me that the King had given her permission to go to

London, where she could see me at leisure.¹ Then I withdrew.

" The duke and the principal lords came to conduct me to my coach, and, as the duke was talking to me expressly to give the Secretary Convé² time to catch me, the said Secretary arrived and told me that the King informed me that, although he had promised me a private audience, nevertheless, he would not grant it me until I should have sent Père Sancy back to France, as he had already desired me to do three times without effect, at which his Majesty felt himself offended."

However, Bassompierre was determined not to give way on the question of Père Sancy :—

" I replied that, if it had been consistent with my duty or with propriety to obey him, I should have done so at the first command, and that I had no other answer to give him than one in conformity with those which I had already given, with which I thought he ought to be satisfied ; and that his Majesty should content himself with the respect I paid him, by keeping shut in my house one of my servants who was neither guilty nor condemned nor accused, who, I promised him, should neither act, nor speak, nor even show himself at his Court or in the town of London, but remain in my own house so long as I should be there, and not leave it except when I did, which I would do on the morrow, if he ordered me ; and that, if he would not give me an audience, I should send to the King my master to know what it pleased him should

¹ The King's fear lest his consort " might commit some extravagance and weep in the sight of everyone " was, after all, well justified for, after the audience, Bassompierre writes to d'Herbault : " The Queen would have come near to weeping in this great assembly, if Madame de la Trémouille had not led her away."

² Edward, Baron, afterwards Viscount Conway. He had been one of the Secretaries of State since January, 1623. He was subsequently removed from that office, " for notable insufficiency," says Clarendon, and in December, 1628, appointed Lord President of the Council. It is somewhat singular that Bassompierre, very particular as a rule to give the English nobles whom he met during his mission their titles, does not do so in the case of Conway. " But it is to be observed," remarks Croker, " that the office of Secretary of State was still (both in England and France) considered a subordinate one, and even the peerage did not exempt the possessor from the plebeian appellation of ' Mr. Secretary,' "

become of me after this refusal, who would not, in my opinion, allow me to grow old in England, waiting until the King took a fancy or had leisure to listen to me.

“ These things I said loud enough, and in no wise moved, in order that all the bystanders might hear me, and I then expressed more resentment to the duke [Buckingham], whom I requested to speak to me no more of this matter, upon which my mind was made up, unless they wished to give me an order to leave London and the island forthwith, which I should receive with joy. And with that I left the company with the Earl of Carlisle and Montague, who brought me back to London and remained to sup with me.”

Bassompierre’s firmness was not without its effect upon the King and Buckingham, who, realising that he was not to be browbeaten, became much more conciliatory. The following evening Buckingham and Walter Montague came to sup with him and he had a long and apparently amicable conference with the former ; while on the 13th, after visiting Henrietta Maria at her “ Palais de Sommerset,” he dined with the Duke at York House. Finally, on the 14th, Montague came with a message from Buckingham that, although he had not complied with the King’s wishes in regard to Père Sancy, his Majesty was graciously pleased to give him audience the following day.

On the morrow the Earl of Bridgewater arrived with the Royal coaches to convey the Ambassador and his suite to Hampton Court. Here he was received by Buckingham, who conducted him into a gallery, where Charles was awaiting him. The duke then withdrew a little distance, and a long interview took place between Charles and Bassompierre, in which there was much heated discussion.

“ He [the King] put himself into a great passion,¹ and

¹ In Bassompierre’s dispatches to his Court we find further details of the stormy interview. “ I was treated,” he writes to Louis XIII, “ with great rudeness, and found the King very little disposed to oblige my master.” Charles complained bitterly of the intrigues of the Queen’s

I, without failing in the respect I owed him, answered him in such wise that, by yielding something to him, he conceded a great deal to me. I witnessed an instance of the great boldness, not to say impudence, of the Duke of Bocquinguem, which was that, when he saw us the most heated in argument, he came up suddenly and placed himself, as a third, between the King and myself, saying : 'I am come to make peace between you two ("Je viens faire le hola entre vous deux").' Upon which I took off my hat, and so long as he stayed with us, I would not put it on again, notwithstanding all the entreaties of the King and of himself to do so. But, so soon as he withdrew, I replaced it, without the King telling me. When the audience terminated, and he [Buckingham] could speak to me, he inquired why I would not cover myself while he was by, and that I did so readily when he was no longer there. I answered that I had done it to do him honour, because *he* was not covered, and that I should have been, which I would not suffer. For which he was much pleased with me, and several times mentioned it afterwards in my praise. But I had also another reason for so doing, which was that it was no longer an audience, but a private conversation, since he had interrupted it, by coming in as a third."¹

" After my last audience was over, the King led me

French attendants ; of their malice in seeking to wean his wife's affection from him, and their insolence in prejudicing her against the English language and nation. The King grew at length so warm as to exclaim to the Ambassador : " Why do you not execute your commission and declare war ? " " I am not a herald to declare war," was the answer, " but a marshal of France, to make it when declared."

¹ The favourite's presumptuous behaviour towards his sovereign was not always so delicately reproved as it was on this occasion by the well-bred and courtly Bassompierre. " On the eventful day of Dr. Lambe [an astrologer, who went by the name of the ' Duke's Devil '] being torn to pieces by the mob, a circumstance occurred to Buckingham, somewhat remarkable, to show the spirit of the times. The King and the duke were in the Spring Gardens, looking on the bowlers ; the duke put on his hat ; one Wilson, a Scotchman, first kissing the duke's hands, snatched it off, saying : ' Off with your hat before the king.' Buckingham, not apt to restrain himself, kicked the Scotchman ; but the king interfered, saying : ' Let him alone, George ; he is either mad or a fool.' ' No, sir,' replied the Scotchman, ' I am a sober man, and, if your Majesty will give me leave, I will tell you of this man which many know and none dare speak.' —Disraeli, *Curiosities of Literature*, Vol. II.

through divers galleries to the Queen's apartments, where he left me, and, after I had had a long conversation with her, I was brought back to London by the same Earl of Brischwater.”¹

It is evident, from Bassompierre's despatches, that after his audience with Charles I, he was, for the moment, tempted to despair of the success of his mission, believing that the King was so embittered against his wife's French attendants that he would never consent to their return, and that Buckingham, notwithstanding the desire he professed for an amicable arrangement, was not to be trusted.

“ I did not fail,” he writes to Richelieu, “ to represent energetically to the King all the points of my commission, and to inform him of the things which I have seen lately, in order to urge him to give satisfaction to the King [Louis XIII]. But I found his mind so opposed to the re-establishment of the officers of the Queen his wife which was demanded of him, that he does not wish to hear of it in any fashion, and that it is waste of time to think of persuading him to it, as you will be able to judge from the letter which I have written to the King, who will acquaint you with his rude behaviour. I am so ill satisfied with him, that were it not that I had received express orders not to break or conclude anything without asking permission to do it, I should have taken leave of him in the same audience. I await the order of the King by the return of this courier, and the honour of your commands.”

And to his brother-in-law, the Comte de Tillières, he writes :—

“ Holland and Gorin² are honest men ; the others, such as Carlisle, Pembroc,³ and Montgomari, discreet ;

¹ John Egerton, Viscount Brackley, created Earl of Bridgewater in 1617, son of Lord Chancellor Egerton.

² Sir George Goring, afterwards Earl of Norwich (1583-1663). He was at this time vice-chamberlain to the Queen.

³ William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, elder brother of Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery.

the duke,¹ flattering and deceitful, who writes me that he is in despair that I have not received the satisfaction that I desire. I shall be extremely anxious to return, and shall do so on the return of this courier, which I beg you to arrange to send back to me promptly ; for I languish here without hope of effecting anything.”²

However, Bassompierre did not receive orders to return to France, and in the course of the next few days the attitude of Charles I and his Court underwent a welcome change, and every influence was brought to bear upon the Ambassador to induce him to represent to the French Government that the religious and domestic difficulties which had led to the expulsion of the Queen’s attendants had been such as to exonerate, if not to justify, that high-handed action, and to persuade Henrietta Maria to consent to some arrangement satisfactory to all parties concerned. Buckingham called on him several times and brought him to Somerset House for informal discussions. All the great nobles of the Court—Pembroke, Carlisle, Carleton, Holland—whom he visited at “Kinsinthon”—Montgomery, Bridgewater, and Conway, appeared anxious to make amends for the coolness of his first reception by every kind of civility and hospitality. He

¹ There were at this time only two dukes, *viz.*, Buckingham and James Stuart, Duke of Lennox and Richmond ; but, as the latter was a lad of fourteen, it is very natural for Bassompierre to speak of the King’s favourite as “the duke.”

² Bassompierre also expresses his dissatisfaction with his reception in England, and with the English generally, in a letter to the Bishop of Mende, formerly Grand Almoner to the Queen. “I found,” he writes, “condescension amongst the Spaniards and civility and courtesy amongst the Swiss in my embassies to those nations, but the English would abate nothing of their natural pride and arrogance.” So we see the charge of “insular pride” is nearly three centuries old, at any rate. The bishop replies : “I am not surprised that you found more courtesy and satisfaction amongst the Spaniards than in the island upon which the tempest has cast you. I have always found the English as unreasonable as the Swiss, but less faithful to their honour than the Spaniards.” No doubt the bishop thought it very unreasonable of the English government to deprive him of his post, but, unless all the charges brought against him by the commissioners appointed to reply to Bassompierre’s complaints are to be disbelieved, he had only himself to thank for it.

was permitted to have private audiences of the Queen both at Somerset House and "Houaithall" [Whitehall], and Charles even condescended to discuss his domestic troubles with him in the presence of his consort.

Bassompierre was ready enough to repay the courtesies and confidences which were now lavished upon him by using the influence which the fact that he had been one of her father's most intimate friends, and had known her since her childhood, gave him over the Queen to bring about an amicable settlement. He recognised that there had been faults as well as grievances on both sides, and, in his private conferences with Henrietta, he pointed out to her that she had committed a very grave error in surrounding herself so closely with her own people and establishing, so to speak, a foreign camp in the midst of the English Court. His task, however, was a far from easy one, and it was complicated by the circumstance that Henrietta was convinced that Buckingham was her personal enemy, and that, jealous lest she should acquire influence with the King, he had made mischief perpetually between them.¹ Eventually, however, by a happy combination of tact, patience, and firmness, he brought her to take a more reasonable view of the situation, though her Majesty's temper was very uncertain, and more than once, when he flattered himself that differences were satisfactorily adjusted, fresh trouble arose, and he had to begin his work over again. But let us turn to his journal, wherein he has noted the progress of his negotiations from day to day :—

"Friday, the 16th [October].—The King and Queen returned to London. The duke [Buckingham] sent to

¹ Madame de Motteville goes so far as to assert, on the authority of Henrietta, that, not only had Buckingham fomented the dissensions between husband and wife, but that he had openly avowed to the Queen that such was his deliberate intention. Whether or no he is to be credited with so perilous a candour, it can scarcely be doubted that his attitude towards the young Queen was a hostile one, and, on one occasion he is said to have told her insolently to beware how she behaved, since in England queens had had their heads cut off before now.

ask me to come to Somerset [House], where we spent more than two hours debating our affairs.

“ Saturday, the 17th.—I went to salute the Queen at Houaithall [Whitehall], and to render her an account of all that I had conferred with the duke about the preceding day.

“ Sunday, the 18th.—I was visited by the Secretary Convé [Conway], who came to see me on behalf of the King. Then the Earl of Carlisle and millord Carleton came to see me.

“ Monday, the 19th.—I went to visit the Queen at Houaithall [Whitehall].

“ Tuesday, the 20th.—The Viscount Houemelton [Wimbledon] and Goring came to dine with me. After dinner I was heard at the Council [Privy Council].

“ Wednesday, the 21st.—I wrote a despatch to the King [of France]. I went to see the Queen and to confer with the duke at Somerset [House].

“ Thursday, the 22nd.—The duke and the Earls of Carlisle and Holland, with Montague, came to dine with me. . . . Then I went to the Queen's, and in the evening to the house of Madame de Strange.¹

“ Friday, the 23rd.—I went to see the Earl of Carlisle. . . .

“ Saturday, the 24th.—I went to see the Queen. The King came there, and she quarrelled with him. The King took me into his chamber, and talked to me for a long while, making many complaints of the Queen his wife.

“ Sunday, the 25th.—The Earls of Pembroch and Montgomery came to see me. Then I went to find the duke, whom I brought to the Queen's apartments, where he made his peace with her, which I effected after infinite difficulties. Afterwards the King arrived and was also reconciled with her. He bestowed many caresses upon her, and thanked me for having reconciled the duke with

¹ Charlotte de la Trémoille, daughter of Claude, Seigneur de la Trémoille, Duc de Thouars, and Charlotte of Nassau, daughter of William the Silent, Prince of Orange. She had married James Stanley, Viscount Strange, afterwards seventh Earl of Derby—"the loyal Earl of Derby"—who was beheaded in 1651. She is celebrated in history for her heroic defence of Latham House against the troops of the Parliament.

his wife. He then led me into his chamber and showed me his jewels, which are very beautiful.¹

“ Monday, the 26th.—After dinner I went to visit the Queen at Somerset [House], with whom I fell out.²

“ Tuesday, the 27th.—The Duke, the Earls of Dorset, Holland and Carlisle, Montagu, Kere³ and Gorin came to dine with me. I went afterwards to see Pembroch and Carleton. In the evening a courier from France arrived.

“ Wednesday, the 28th.—In the morning I went to Houaithall [Whitehall] to speak to the duke and the Secretary Convé, because the King was going to Amp-toncourt. After dinner I went to see the Queen at Somerset [House], with whom I made friends. In the evening the duke and the Earl of Holland took me to sup with Antonio Porter,⁴ who feasted Don Augustine

¹ Presumably, these were Charles's private jewels, for many of the Crown jewels had been pawned to the States-General. “ Warrants are extant,” says Croker, “ authorising Buckingham and Sackville Crow to pawn jewels to the amount of £300,000; viz.: ‘ a great rich jewel of goulde, call'd the Mirror of Great Britain, having twoe faire little dyamonds, cut lozenge wise, garnish'd with small dyamonds, and a pendant with a faire dyamond cutt in fawcetts without foyle, etc.’ ”

² During Bassompierre's embassy, Henrietta Maria wrote her mother a letter which the marshal regarded as a proof that she distrusted him. On learning of this, the Queen wrote to him as follows:—

“ My Cousin, Understanding that you had been vexed respecting a letter I wrote to the Queen my mother, and that you think that I distrust you, I beg you to dismiss the idea and to believe that I am not so ungrateful for the services which you have rendered me as to avoid you. M. le Duc [probably the Duc de Chevreuse] will tell you about the affair as it happened; and, as for myself, I can assure you that my intention never was to offend you, for I should be most blameworthy to act thus against persons who testify affection for me, particularly against you, whom I honour, and to whom my obligations are so great that I shall ever remain,

“ Your affectionate cousin,

“ HENRIETTE-MARIE.”

It is perhaps to this episode that Bassompierre here refers.

³ Perhaps Robert Ker, afterwards Earl of Roxburgh.

⁴ Probably, Endymion Porter (1587-1649), groom of the bedchamber to Charles I, whom he had accompanied on his journey to Spain, where he sometimes acted as interpreter, having been educated in that country. He was a generous patron of literature and art, and Herrick declares that poets would never be wanting so long as they had a patron like Porter,

“ who doth give
Not only subject for our art,
But oil of maintenance to it.”

Porter was devoted to Buckingham, to whose favour he owed his rise to fortune, and in his will, dated the year before his death, he

Fiesque, the Marquis de Piennes,¹ the Chevalier de Jars and Gobelin.² After supper we had music.

“ Thursday, the 29th.—In the morning I received a visit from the Earls of Holland and Carlisle. . . .

“ Friday, the 30th.—I went to see the Queen at Somerset [House], and afterwards the duke at Valinfort.³

“ Saturday, the last day of October.—The Ambassador of Denmark came to see me. Then I went to Madame de Strange’s house.

“ November.—Sunday, first day of November, and of All Saints.—I made my devotions. Afterwards I went to visit the Duchess of Lennox⁴ and the Secretary Convé [Conway]. On this day a council was held to deliberate upon my affairs.

“ Monday, the 2nd.—In the morning I went to see the Earl of Holland. Then the duke having given me a rendezvous in the Queen’s gallery, we conferred there together for a very long time. After dinner I returned to see the Queen, in order to render her an account of my conversation with the duke, at which she was uneasy, because we had parted on bad terms.

“ charged all his sons, upon his blessing, that, leaving the like charges to their posterity, they did all of them observe and respect the children and family of his Lord Duke of Buckingham, deceased, to whom he owed all the happiness he had in the world.”

¹ Charles de Brouilly, Marquis de Piennes.

² Pierre Gobelin, counsellor to the Parlement in 1618, was appointed *maître des requêtes* in 1624.

³ Wallingford House. It stood near Charing Cross, upon the site of the Old Buildings of the Admiralty.

⁴ There were at this time two Duchesses of Lennox: Catherine, Clifton, widow of Esmé Stuart, the first duke, and Frances Howard, widow of Ludovic, the second duke, whom James I had created Duke of Richmond, in the peerage of England. As the latter was a vain, ambitious, and intriguing woman, and possessed of considerable influence at Court, it is probable that it was to her that Bassompierre’s visit was paid. The duchess had been married three times. She began her matrimonial experiments with a merchant, a Mr. Prannell; continued them with an earl, Edwin, Earl of Hertford, and concluded with a duke of royal blood. If, however, we are to believe the gossip of the time, she would fain have made yet another, and secured a yet more exalted consort. “ For, finding the King (James) a widower, she vowed, after so great a prince as Richmond, never to be blown with kisses or eat at the table of a subject; and this vow must be spread abroad that the King might notice the bravery of her spirit. But this bait would not catch the old king, and she, to make good her resolution, speciously observed her vow to the last.”

“ Tuesday, the 3rd.—The duke brought his little daughter¹ to my house as a pledge of reconciliation. He remained there to dine with Montague, Keri and Porter, and then took me to see the King, who was going to play tennis ; and I went to visit the Queen to tell her of my reconciliation with the duke.

“ Wednesday, the 4th.—I went to see the Duchess of Lennox. I wrote to the duke on the subject of my business, and then went to find the Queen to show her the copy of what I had written. In the evening the duke sent Montague to sup with me, and to assure me from him that he would arrange all my business in accordance with my wishes. I forthwith sent to apprise the Queen of this.”

On the Thursday, Conway arrived to request Bassompierre to come on the following day to the Council, where he should receive an answer to proposals which he had made. The next day Buckingham came to dine with him, and afterwards took him to Whitehall, and left him in a room in the King's apartments, with Goring, Montague, and Lewkenor to entertain him, while he himself went to the Council.

“ A little while after he came to seek me, and told me that the answer the Council proposed to make me was worth nothing [i.e., a mere formality], but that I should not be uneasy about it, but that I should reply firmly, on the spot, and that afterwards he would arrange everything in such a way that I should be satisfied. A little while after Convé [Conway] came to call me into the Council, where after they had placed a chair for me at the upper end, the gentlemen of the Council acquainted me, by the mouth of Carleton, of what they had resolved in reference to the proposition that I had made to the same Council some days before. They handed me this answer in writing, and then had it read to me.”²

¹ Mary Villiers, to whom by letters-patent of August, 1627, the duchy of Buckingham was granted in default of heirs male. Like the lady just mentioned, she was married three times: first, to Lord Herbert, son of Philip, Earl of Pembroke; secondly to James Stuart, Duke of Lennox and Richmond, and, finally, to Thomas Howard, a brother of the Earl of Carlisle. She had no children by any of her husbands.

² Presumably, a French translation.

The first part of this document contained a long and elaborated defence of Charles I's action in summarily expelling the Queen's attendants from the country, by which, the commissioners maintained, neither the letter nor the spirit of the marriage-treaty had been violated, since "the said persons had been sent back as offenders, who had by their ill-conduct disturbed, in the first place, the affairs of the kingdom, and, secondly, the domestic government of the house of his Majesty and of the Queen his dearly-loved consort, whereon depended the happiness of their lives."

The Bishop of Mende and his priests (to whom the ambassador, M. de Blainville, had also lent his hand) had endeavoured, by their intrigues, to create factions and dissensions amongst the subjects of his Majesty, exciting fear and mistrust in the Protestants, encouraging the Roman Catholics, and even instigating the disaffected in Parliament against everything connected with the service of the King and the public tranquillity of the kingdom.

The Queen's house they had converted into a rendezvous of Jesuits and fugitives, and a place of security for the persons, property, and papers of such as had violated our laws.

By subtle means they discovered what was passing in private between the King and Queen, and laboured to create in the gentle mind of the Queen a repugnance to all his Majesty desired or ordered, even to what he did for the honour of his dignity, and avowedly fomented discords between their Majesties, as a thing essential to the welfare of their Church.

They had endeavoured by all means to inspire her with a contempt for our nation and a dislike of our usages, and had made her neglect the English language, as if she neither had, nor wished to have, any common interest among us, who desire nothing more than to promote the happiness of her Majesty.

They introduced, by means of the priests, strange orders and regulations, unheard of in times past, and disapproved by others of their profession.

They had subjected the person of the Queen to the rules of a, as it were, monastic obedience, in order to oblige her to do many base and servile acts, which were not only unworthy of the majesty of a queen, but also very dangerous to her health.¹ Witness what had befallen a person of distinction amongst her attendants, who had died therefrom, and declared at her death that they were the cause of it.

It is perhaps needful to explain that this poor lady died from the severities of the discipline inflicted upon herself, and not upon her royal mistress. The commissioners are not too luminous on this point.

Finally, as the crown of all these delinquencies, came the supposed pilgrimage to Tyburn, already referred to, which, said the commissioners, had exhausted the sorely-tried patience of the King and decided him to rid the country of her Majesty's French attendants.

The latter part of the document dealt with the non-fulfilment of the engagements respecting the English Roman Catholics, which was defended on the ground of expediency, while it was contended that the article promising liberty of worship had been agreed to by the English commissioners, and accepted by the French, "simply as a matter of form to satisfy the Roman Catholic party of France and the Pope."

The commissioners concluded by observing that "the visit and deportment of M. de Bassompierre had been very agreeable to his Majesty" and that the King of France might rest assured that in all matters touching

¹ An indignant newsmonger thus enumerates the penances to which the Queen had, or was supposed to have, been subjected : "Had they not also made her, on St. James's Day, dabble in the dirt, in a foul morning, from Somerset House to St. James's, her Luciferian confessor riding by her in his coach ? Yea, they have made her spin, to go barefoot, to eat her meat out of treen dishes [dishes made of "tree," i.e., wooden trenchers], to wait at table and serve her servants, with many other ridiculous and absurd penances ; and if these rogues dare thus insult over the daughter, sister and wife of so great Kings, what slavery would they not make us, the people, undergo ?"—*Ellis's Letters, Pory to Mead*, July 1, 1626.

the conscience of the Queen the treaty should be strictly observed, and that his Majesty, "from the love he bore to his dear consort," would show all the indulgence to the Roman Catholics which the constitution and security of his State would allow.

Bassompierre requested the Council's permission to reply forthwith, and, this being granted, "he did so with great vehemence and better to his own liking than he had ever spoken in his life." We can understand his satisfaction, for it was undoubtedly a very able and eloquent speech, and gives us a high opinion of his promptitude and address. The turn he gives to the "Tyburn pilgrimage"—the act which the commissioners asserted had driven Charles I to extremities—is extremely ingenious. He admits that the Queen went with her French attendants to Tyburn, but it was in the course of one of her customary evening walks in the park of "St. Jemmes" and the "Hipparc," which adjoins it—a walk such as she had often taken in the company of the King her husband. But that she had made it in procession, or that she had approached within fifty paces of the gallows, or that she had offered up any prayers, public or private, or that she had fallen on her knees, holding the hours or chaplets in her hands, he most strenuously denies. For the rest, to have thought a little of God at sight of the gibbet seems to him a small offence. "Granted," says he, "that they prayed for those who died on the gibbet, they did well, for however wicked the men might have been who died on it, they were condemned to death, and not to damnation. And never has one been forbidden to pray to God for such. You tell me that is to blame the memory of the kings who had them put to death. On the contrary, I praise the justice of these kings, and implore the compassion of the King of kings, in order that He may be satisfied with their bodily death, and that He may pardon through our prayers and intercessions (if these be sufficient) the souls upon whom neither the justice nor the pardon of the kings

of this world can have any effect. To conclude, I deny formally that this action has been committed, and offer, at the same time, to prove that they would have done very well to commit it."

Bassompierre's oration lasted an hour, " and when I came out," says he, " I went to find the Queen to show her the fine answer which they had given me, and the substance of what I had replied and protested."

In the evening Buckingham sent the Ambassador word that all of the Council who could speak or understand French would call upon him the following morning, and that he might hope for a favourable conclusion ; " for the King had told him that it was his intention to satisfy the King his brother and to send him [Bassompierre] away content."

At seven o'clock next morning, Lord Dorset came to tell him that he should have satisfaction and that the Council would come soon afterwards to meet him, adding that " it only depended upon himself that all should go right."

" He found me," says Bassompierre, " in a bad state for discussion, for either the weather, which was very foggy,¹ or my constitution, or the long and vehement reply that I had made the preceding day, had reduced me to such a condition that I had lost my voice, and, notwithstanding all my efforts, he could scarcely hear me."

Buckingham and the rest of the Council arrived soon afterwards, and Carleton, on behalf of his colleagues, replied to Bassompierre's speech of the previous day in a very conciliatory tone, pointing out the mischief that would result from a rupture between the two countries, and proposing that they should leave no means untried to

¹ The fogs of England have been in all ages a sore trial to foreigners. Gondomar, Spanish Ambassador in the time of James I, when someone who was going to Spain waited on him to ask whether he had any commands, replied : " Only my compliments to the sun, which I have not seen since I came to England." Caraccioli, Neapolitan Ambassador to the Court of George II, in a conversation with that monarch, took the liberty of preferring the *moon* of Naples to the *sun* of England.

come to some amicable arrangement, which, he knew, was the most earnest desire of the King.

“ Upon this we then got to work,” says Bassompierre, “ and we did not experience much difficulty ; for they were very reasonable, and I moderate in my demands. The greatest difficulty was over the question of the re-establishment of the priests, but in the end we came to an agreement upon that. I then entertained them to a magnificent banquet, and, when they had taken their departure, I went to visit the Queen to inform her of the good news of our treaty.”

On the following day Buckingham and Holland came to dine with him, and he afterwards received a visit from the young Duke of Lennox. Then he proceeded to Whitehall, where he had a private audience of Charles I, “ in which,” he says, “ he confirmed and ratified all that his commissioners had negotiated and concluded with me, of which he showed me the draft and made me read it.¹

“ In the evening, the resident of the King of Bohemia came to congratulate me and to sup, as did also *largely* the Ambassador of Denmark.²

¹ In a letter to d'Herbault, Bassompierre gives details of this agreement : “ First, she [the Queen] has re-established—and this is for her conscience—a bishop and ten priests, a confessor and his coadjutor, and ten musicians for her chapel ; that of St. Gemmes is to be finished with its cemetery, and another is to be built for her in her palace of Somerset, at the expense of the King her husband. In attendance on her person she will have of her own nation, two ladies of the bedchamber, three bedchamber-women, a sempstress, and a clear-starcher. In regard to her health, two physicians, an apothecary and a surgeon. For her household, a grand chamberlain, an equerry, a secretary, a gentleman usher of the privy chamber and one of the chamber of presence, a baxter-groom, (*i.e.*, baker), a valet. All her officers of the mouth and goblet will be French.” This was, in all conscience, a sufficiently numerous foreign establishment ; but it was scanty in comparison with the army of more or less useless persons located at the English Court on the strength of the first treaty, which, including the servants of the higher officials, amounted to more than four hundred.

It was further stipulated that all the priests detained in prison should be set at liberty, and that the pursuivants, or officials whose duty it was to prosecute Catholics who offended against the Penal Laws, should be abolished.

² The Danes, like the Germans, were at this time proverbial throughout Europe for their too great indulgence in the pleasures of the table, and it would appear that Bassompierre's guest was, as an ambassador should be, a worthy representative of his country.

The day which followed Charles I's ratification of the arrangement intended to secure his domestic peace was Lord Mayor's Day, and it will doubtless be very gratifying to any member of the Corporation of London who may chance to peruse these pages to learn the respect in which that civic festival was held three centuries ago :—

“ Monday, the 9th, which is the day of the election of the Mayor, I came in the morning to Somerset [House] to meet the Queen, who had come there to see him pass along the Thames, in the midst of a magnificent procession of boats, on his way to Voestminster [Westminster] to take the oath. Then the Queen dined, and afterwards placed herself in her coach and placed me at the same door with her.¹ The Duke of Bocquinguem, by her command, likewise placed himself in her coach and we went into the street of Schipsay [Cheapside] to see the pageant pass, which is the grandest which takes place at the reception of any official in the world. While waiting for it to pass, the Queen played primero with the duke, the Earl of Dorset and me. Then the duke took me to dine at the house of the new Mayor, who that day gave a dinner to more than eight hundred persons. Afterwards, the duke and the Earls of Montgomery and Holland, having

¹ The royal coaches of this and, indeed, of a much later period, were huge structures, not unlike four-poster beds on wheels, for they had no glass and were sheltered by leather curtains. They were capable of holding eight persons, two of whom were perched on niches, called boots, at each door. These places were usually reserved for some favoured guest or friend of the King or Queen. When Philip V of Spain left Versailles to take possession of his kingdom, Louis XIV took his grandson the first stage of his journey in his own coach, which accommodated the whole Royal family. “ The two kings and the Duc de Bourgogne,” says Saint Simon, “ sat on one side, the Dauphin, the Duchesse de Bourgogne and the Duc de Berry on the other ; the Duc and Duchesse d’Orléans at either door.” A most illustrious coachful ! Coaches were introduced into England in the latter part of Elizabeth’s reign. When the Queen went to St. Paul’s to return thanks for the defeat of the Armada, “ she did come in a chariot-throne, with four pillars behind to bear a canopy, on the top whereof was a crown imperial, and two lower pillars before, whereon stood a lion and a dragon, supporters of the arms of England, drawn by two white horses.” Two horses would appear to have been the usual number for some time. Buckingham was the first who ventured on six, which, we are told, was looked upon with strong disapproval, as a mark of the “ mastering spirit ” of the favourite.

brought me back to my house, I went to walk in the Morsfils.¹

Notwithstanding that the Queen had done Buckingham the honour to invite him to witness the Lord Mayor's procession with her the previous day, her Majesty and the duke had not entirely made up their differences; for on the following day we learn that Carlisle came to see Bassompierre "in order to conclude the reconciliation" which the Ambassador succeeded in negotiating.

"On the 11th Bassompierre went with Holland and "M. Harber, who had been Ambassador in France"² to dine with Lord Wimbledon at the manor from which he took his title, which the marshal thought a very fine house. Wimbledon's sister-in-law, the Countess of Exeter, had come to assist in doing the honours to the distinguished guests, who were "magnificently entertained."

Bassompierre's belief that the Queen was satisfied with the arrangements that had been made in regard to her Household received a rude shock a day or two later, when a more stormy scene took place at Whitehall than had yet occurred.

"*Thursday, the 12th.*—I went to see the Stuart Earl of Pembroch³ and the Secretary Convé, and, not finding them, repaired to the Queen's apartments, to which the King came. They fell out with one another, and I afterwards with the Queen on this matter."

Bassompierre, out of all patience at seeing Henrietta

¹ The Moorfields were a walk planted with trees, on the north of the city, comprising the Moorfields property, so called, the Middle Moorfields and the Upper Moorfields. Until the beginning of the previous reign, the Moorfields were, according to Stow, "a most noisome offensive place, being a general laystall, loathsome to both sight and smell, . . . but, through the pains and industry of Master Nicholas Leate they were reduced from their former vile condition into most fayre and royale walkes."

² "M. Harber" was no doubt Edward Herbert, the celebrated Lord Herbert of Cherbury, who had been Ambassador in France in 1619.

³ Pembroke was Lord Steward.

continue to play the vixen after her grievances had been redressed, told her his mind plainly, without caring for her rank :—

“ I told her that I should next day take leave of the King and return to France, leaving the business unfinished, and should inform the King [Louis XIII] and the Queen her mother that it was all her fault. When I returned home, Père Sancy, to whom the Queen had written about our falling out, came to accommodate it, with such impertinences that I got very angry with him.”

This last sentence constitutes a full justification of Charles's persistent demands, when Bassompierre first arrived in England, that Sancy should be sent back to France. It is evident that, although the Ambassador had doubtless kept his promise that this meddlesome ecclesiastic should not approach the Court nor even leave his house, the latter had all along been in correspondence with the Queen, had contributed to keep her mind in a most mischievous state of agitation, and now, just when everything seemed to have been settled satisfactorily, was pushing her to fresh demands, so unreasonable that even Bassompierre could not attempt to justify them. There can be no doubt that Sancy was acting under the instructions of the Queen-Mother and Bérulle, and had come to England with the express purpose of establishing secret relations with Henrietta ; but it is not a little surprising to find the English Court so early and so well apprised of his mission as it appears to have been.

The next day, Friday the 13th, the Queen, to whom Sancy had, of course, reported the unfavourable reception which his overtures on her behalf had received, sent for Bassompierre to come to her ; but the Ambassador, who was determined to bring her Majesty to reason, begged to be excused. His refusal had the desired effect, for on the Saturday “ the Earl of Carlisle came to visit him for the purpose of reconciling him with the Queen,” and peace was re-established.

On the 15th, to celebrate the amicable termination of Bassompierre's mission, Buckingham gave a magnificent *fête* in the Ambassador's honour at York House, which the King and Queen graced with their presence :—

“ I went to meet the King at Houaithall [Whitehall], who placed me in his barge and brought me to the duke at Iorchaus [York House], who entertained me to the most superb banquet that I ever saw in my life. The King supped with the Queen and myself at a table which was served by complete ballets at each course, and there were divers representations, changes of scenery, tables and music. The duke attended upon the King at table, the Earl of Carlisle upon the Queen, and the Earl of Holland upon me. After supper they conducted the King and us into another room, where the company assembled ; they entered by a turnstile, as in monasteries, without any confusion. Here took place a superb ballet, which the duke danced, and afterwards we danced country-dances¹ until four hours after midnight. Then we were conducted into vaulted apartments,² where there were five different collations.”³

¹ The English “ country dance ” was a corruption in name of the French *contredanse*.

² “ The ground on which this palace stood,” observes Croker, “ shelled down from the Strand, where the principal entrance was to the river. The principal floor and state rooms were probably on the level with the entrance on the Strand side, but must have been a story above the ground on the river side ; and this story was probably the vaulted apartments which Bassompierre mentions. It seems odd that he should think the *vaulting* a peculiarity worth mentioning, as the ground floor of the Tuileries and the Louvre, in which he passed most of his life, were vaulted ; but vaulted domestic apartments were probably then, as now [1819], extremely rare ; and the singular and magnificent effect of vaulted rooms, furnished for the purpose, must have struck a person of Bassompierre's taste.”

³ A newsletter preserved in the British Museum, which has been published by Isaac Disraeli, in his *Curiosities of Literature*, gives the following account of this *fête* :

“ Last Sunday, at night, the duke's grace entertained their majesties and the French ambassador at York House with great feasting and show, when all things came down in clouds, among which one rare device was a representation of the French King and the two Queens [Anne of Austria and the Queen-Mother], with their chieftest attendants ; and so to the life, that the Queen's majesty could name them : it was four o'clock in the morning before they parted, and then the King and Queen,

On the following day the King, who with the Queen had spent the night at York House, sent to invite Bassompierre to return there to hear a concert given by the Queen's musicians. The concert was followed by a ball, and the ball by a play, at the conclusion of which the Ambassador, who had been dancing until the small hours of the morning, must have experienced considerable difficulty in remaining awake.

During the next fortnight Bassompierre appears to have entertained, or been entertained by, all the distinguished persons of the Court. At one dinner-party which he gave his guests were : Buckingham, Carlisle, Holland, Theophilus Howard, Earl of Suffolk, Carleton, Walter Montague, Goring, Orazio Gentileschi, the celebrated painter, Thomas Cary, son of the Earl of Monmouth, and a poet of some note in his time, and Saint-Antoine, the King's French equerry, who is depicted by Vandyck holding his royal master's helmet in the magnificent picture of Charles I mounted on a white horse ; while after dinner William Cecil, Earl of Exeter, and Edward Montague, Lord Mandeville, afterwards Earl of Manchester, joined the party. Seldom can a more interesting company have been gathered round one table.

On November 29 he began to make his adieux :

“ The Earl of Carlisle and Lucnar [Lewkenor] came to fetch me with the King's coaches, to bring me to take

together with the French ambassador, lodged there. Some estimate this entertainment at five or six thousand pounds.”

Sir Philip Gibbs, in his admirable biography of Buckingham, says that this “ rare device,” was a political allegory, arranged by the duke himself, with the assistance of his master of the ceremonies, Balthazar Gerbier. “ It represented Maria de' Medici, the Queen-Mother, enthroned in the midst of Neptune's court upon the sea dividing England and France, and welcoming Frederick and Elizabeth of the Palatinate, with her three daughters and their husbands, the Kings of Spain and England and the Prince of Piedmont. It was Buckingham's new ideal of foreign policy. France as the ally of England, the Elector Palatine restored to his throne, and peace with Spain. Buckingham's ideal, alas ! was no more substantial than the pasteboard and tinsel and flowing draperies of his actors, and, like the masque, a mockery.”

leave of their Majesties, who gave me public audience in the great hall of Houaithall [Whitehall]. I then returned with him [the King] into his bedchamber, into which he made me enter ; and afterwards I went to sup in the chamber of the Earl of Carlisle, who entertained me superbly. Lucnar came to bring me from the King a very valuable present of four diamonds in the form of a lozenge, with a big pearl at the end. The same evening, the King sent for me to come and hear an excellent English play.¹

“ Monday, the 30th.—I went to take leave of the millord Montague, President of the Council, the Earls of Pembroch and Montgomery, of the Earl of Exeter, of the countess his wife, of the Countess of Oxford, his daughter, and of the millord Carleton. Thence I went to have a private audience of the Queen.”

The following day was occupied in further farewell visits, and in the evening—the last which he was to spend in London—the Countess of Exeter gave in his honour “ a magnificent banquet, followed by a ball.”

On December 2 the Ambassador took his departure :

“ The Earl of Barcher² came to bid me adieu, and afterwards all the Queen’s Household. The Earl of Suffolk sent me a horse.³ I went to take leave of the Queen, who gave me a beautiful diamond. Next I took leave of the ladies of the bedchamber, and afterwards of the Earl of Carlisle, who had hurt himself very much in the head the previous evening.⁴ Then I came to the

¹ Although Bassompierre could have been no very good judge of the excellence of an English play, it is to be regretted that he does not tell us what it was. Very probably, it was one of Shakespeare’s, as his patron Montgomery was Lord Chamberlain, in whose department the selection of the plays to be performed before their Majesties lay.

² Thomas Howard, Viscount Andover, second son of Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk. The title of Earl of Berkshire had been revived in his favour in February, 1626.

³ English horses were much prized on the Continent, and Bassompierre had been presented with quite a number. Carlisle had given him six, Holland three, and Goring two, and very possibly he may have received others which he does not mention. Unfortunately, as we shall see, few, if any, of these poor animals survived to reach the shores of France.

⁴ As Carlisle was a convivial soul, it is not improbable that Lady Exeter’s hospitality may have been responsible for this mishap.

duke's chamber, where I remained for a rather long while, awaiting my despatches and the letters which the King had promised me abolishing the pursuivants of England.¹ Finally, I took leave of the duke and the other lords of the Court, and, accompanied only by Lucnar and the Chevalier de Jars, for I had sent my people on in advance, I took my place in one of the Queen's coaches and proceeded to Gravesinde [Gravesend], where I passed the night. On Thursday, the 3rd, I slept at Sittimbourne, the next night at Cantorberi, and on Saturday, the 5th, I arrived at Dover, with a retinue of 400 persons who were to cross the sea with me, including seventy priests² whom I had delivered from the prisons of England."

Bassompierre, it will be remembered, had encountered no difficulty in crossing the Channel on his way to England ; but now there was a very different tale to tell. No sooner had his retinue embarked than the wind changed and blew half-a-gale from the South ; and for four days it was impossible for the vessels to leave the harbour. This delay was the more exasperating, since he had undertaken to defray the travelling expenses of his whole suite, including the liberated priests, in the fond belief that they would be able to sail within a few hours of their arrival at Dover, and every day they lingered on English soil meant several hundred crowns out of the unfortunate Ambassador's pocket.

On the 8th, Tuesday, Walter Montague came riding into Dover and informed Bassompierre that Charles I had decided to send Buckingham on a special embassy to the Court of France, and that the duke proposed to start

¹ See page 489 *supra*.

² "Seventeen would have been nearer the truth," observes Croker. "Rymer has preserved the warrant under the sign manual, 27 November, 1626, 'for the release of and permitting to go abroad of sixteen priests at the intercession of the Maréchal de Bassompierre. Ambassador Extraordinary from the Most Christian King, our dear brother, the Ambassador engaging to carry them abroad.' Particular care seems to have been taken to express that this was done in compliment to Bassompierre, as the deed runs : 'to gratify the said Maréchal.' Bassompierre, in his *Ambassades*, gives the same list as Rymer."

immediately. The reasons which had led to this decision were as follows :—

In the many conferences which had taken place between Bassompierre and the English Ministers, other matters besides the re-establishment of the Queen's French attendants and the treatment of the English Catholics had come under discussion. The most important of these was that thorny question which for centuries has been the cause of so much ill-feeling whenever this country has been at war—the right of searching neutral vessels for contraband of war—but which no naval Power in its sound senses would dream for a moment of abandoning. It was indisputable that, since the outbreak of hostilities with Spain, a large trade had been carried on between Spain and Flanders under the French flag ; but it was likewise true that the English cruisers had conducted the blockade of the Flemish coast with more zeal than discretion, and that an unreasonably long time had been permitted to elapse between the seizure of quite innocent French vessels and their release. Thus, in the previous September, three ships belonging to Rouen, with extremely valuable cargoes on board, had been seized, and, notwithstanding the strongest protests from the French Government, were still detained in our ports.

In the discussions on the maritime question, Bassompierre took up the same firm yet moderate attitude which he had observed during the negotiations on that of the marriage-treaty, admitting the reasonableness of England's objections to the trade which was being carried on under the protection of the French flag, but urging that some understanding should be arrived at by which the perpetual interference of the English cruisers might be obviated. It is quite probable that a treaty prescribing the conditions upon which neutral vessels should be liable to arrest might have been the outcome of these conferences, had not events occurred to exasperate both nations.

Towards the end of November, news arrived that

d'Épernon, now Governor of Guienne, who detested Richelieu and his policy of peace with England, had seized a fleet of 200 English and Scottish vessels which were about to sail from Bordeaux with a full cargo of wine, upon which duty had already been paid. It was an open act of war ; the London merchants clamoured for letters of marque to defend their vessels and retaliate upon the French "pirates," and Charles I issued an Order in Council for the seizure of all French vessels in English waters. Short of an actual declaration of war the peace had been broken between the two countries ; but Buckingham, blinded by an extraordinary optimism, still believed that, if he were to cross over to France with the friendly and moderate-minded Bassompierre, who, he had learned, was detained at Dover, the dispute might be satisfactorily arranged ; and accordingly persuaded the King to appoint him Ambassador Extraordinary to the French Court, and sent Walter Montague to inform the marshal of the mission which had been entrusted to him.

Bassompierre was greatly astonished and embarrassed by the news that Montague brought. He was aware that it was the intention of Charles I to send an ambassador to France, but had never dreamed that Buckingham, after the very plain hint which he had received the previous year that his presence at the French Court would not be tolerated, would have the effrontery to take upon himself the mission. The thought of the indignation of Louis XIII and Richelieu if he were to return to Paris accompanied by the presumptuous favourite was a most unpleasant one ; and he therefore begged Montague to inform Buckingham that he advised him strongly to abandon his intention of coming to France, as he very much feared that he would not be received, and sent him back in all haste to London. Then, in order to leave nothing to chance, at two o'clock the next morning he embarked with his suite for Calais, notwithstanding that it was still blowing hard.

He was not, however, to escape Buckingham so easily, for the storm carried them towards Dieppe, and, after beating about the Channel for some time, in a vain attempt to make the French coast, they were obliged to return and land near Dover, to which they sadly made their way back. The bad weather continued for several days, and on the 12th Buckingham, who had learned that Bassompierre was still detained at Dover, sent Montague to beg him to meet him at Canterbury, whither he proposed to come on the following day.

The duke arrived, accompanied by Carlisle, Holland and Goring and the Chevalier de Jars, and, says Bassompierre, “wished to show me his splendour by entertaining me” in the evening to a magnificent banquet.” After supper the marshal had a long conference with Buckingham, in which he endeavoured to persuade him to abandon his proposed visit to France; but the latter appeared absolutely determined upon it, and was still in the same mind when they adjourned to bed.

Next morning, however, Bassompierre returned to the charge, and, though the duke refused to hear of giving up his journey, he at length consented to postpone it until the marshal had submitted the proposed embassy to Louis XIII. It was arranged that Balthazar Gerbier should accompany Bassompierre to Paris and bring back word to his patron whether the French Court were prepared to receive him. “At dinner,” says Bassompierre, “he entertained me to as magnificent a banquet as that of the preceding evening; and then we embraced, never to see one another again.”

Much relieved at having extricated himself from a very awkward situation—for had the duke insisted on accompanying him back to France, Bassompierre would undoubtedly have got into serious trouble—the marshal returned to Dover, to find that his suite, acting presumably on his instructions, had taken advantage of a change in the weather and sailed for Calais. Although it was

not until several days later that the Ambassador himself was able to cross the Channel, it would have been infinitely cheaper for him had his attendants elected to remain at Dover, notwithstanding the heavy expense which their maintenance there entailed :

“ They encountered such ill-fortune,” says he, “ that they were unable to reach Calais for five days, and were obliged to cast into the sea my two fine coaches, in which by mischance there were clothes to the value of more than 40,000 francs which I had purchased in England for presents. I lost, further, twenty-nine horses, who died of thirst during those five days, because no fresh water had been laid in for this passage, which in fine weather does not occupy more than three hours.”

On the morning of the 18th, although the sea was still very rough, Bassompierre embarked once more and about noon arrived safely on the French shore, after no worse misadventure than a violent attack of sea-sickness, which prostrated him to such a degree that he was unable to continue his journey until the following day.

Seldom can anyone have had more cause to anathematise the Channel passage than the luckless Bassompierre. The maintenance of himself and his suite at Dover had alone cost him, he tells us, 4,000 crowns ; he had lost 40,000 francs worth of clothes, two fine coaches, which must have been worth a large sum, and nearly thirty horses, including probably most of those presented to him by Carlisle and other English nobles, all of which were, of course, valuable animals. In short, in the fortnight which had elapsed between his arrival at Dover and his landing at Calais, he must have lost at the very lowest computation the equivalent of half-a-million francs in money of to-day.

On the 20th he reached Amiens, whose governor, the Duc de Chaulnes, ordered the guns of the citadel to fire a salute in his honour, and entertained him magnificently ; and two days later he arrived in Paris. Here, as he had,

of course, foreseen, he found that "the coming of the Duke of Bocquinguem was not agreeable," and Louis XIII ordered him to write to the duke to that effect.

Since certain writers appear inclined to question the ability shown by Bassompierre in his mission to England, it may be as well to cite here the opinion of so high an authority on the period as Gardiner:—

"He [Bassompierre] knew the world well, and he had that power of seizing upon the strong point of his opponent's case which goes far to the making of a successful diplomatist. To the young Queen he gave the best possible advice; told her to make the best of her situation and warned her against the folly of setting hirself against the current ideas of the country in which she lived and of the man to whom she was married. In the question of her household he was at the same time firm and conciliatory. He acknowledged that Charles had a genuine grievance and that the Queen would never be a real wife to him as long as she was taught by a circle of foreigners to regard herself primarily as a foreigner; while, at the same time, he spoke boldly of the breach of contract which had been committed. In the end, he gained the confidence both of the King and of Buckingham, and, with the consent of the King of France, a new arrangement was agreed to, by which a certain number of French persons would be admitted to attend upon the Queen, whilst a great part of her household was to be formed of natives of England."

The historian also praises the conduct of Bassompierre in the discussions on the maritime question.

CHAPTER XXXV

The Assembly of the Notables—Bassompierre nominated one of the four presidents—The “sorry Château of Versailles”—The ballet of *le Sérieux et le Grotesque*—Execution of Montmorency-Boutville and Des Chapelles for duelling—Death of *Madame*—Preparations for war with England—Louis XIII resolves to take command of the army assembled in Poitou—The King falls ill at the Château of Villeroy—Bassompierre is prevented by Richelieu from visiting him—Intrigue by which the Duc d’Angoulême is appointed to the command of the army which ought to have devolved upon Bassompierre—Descent of Buckingham upon the Ile de Ré—Blockade of the fortress of Saint-Martin—Investment of La Rochelle by the Royal army—Bassompierre, the King, and Richelieu at the Château of Saumery—The Cardinal assumes the practical direction of the military operations—Provisions and reinforcements are thrown into Saint-Martin—Refusal of the Maréchaux de Bassompierre and Schomberg to allow Angoulême to be associated with them in the command of the Royal army—Schomberg is persuaded to accept the duke as a colleague—Bassompierre persists in his refusal and requests permission of the King to leave the army—He is offered and accepts the command of a separate army, which is to blockade La Rochelle from the north-western side—He declines the government of Brittany—Dangerous situation of Buckingham’s army in the Ile de Ré—Unsuccessful attempt to take Saint-Martin by assault—Disastrous retreat of the English.

DURING Bassompierre’s absence in England, Louis XIII had paid him the very high compliment of nominating him one of the four presidents of the Assembly of the Notables, which was opened at the Tuileries by the King on December 2, 1626, and continued sitting until February 24 of the following year. This assembly, from which Richelieu had systematically excluded all the makers of cabals at the Court—that is to say, practically all the great nobles—voted in accordance with the Cardinal’s desires and recommended the reduction of useless expenditure, pensions, and the King’s Household, the re-organisation of the Army, which, when on a peace footing,

was not to exceed 20,000 men, the strengthening of the Navy, the relief of the lower noblesse as a counterpoise to the greater, and the destruction of all the fortifications of towns and châteaux not required for the defence of the frontiers.

Bassompierre, being the junior of the four presidents,¹ does not appear to have spoken very often, but a sentence in one of his speeches is worth recording, in the light of subsequent events. Praising Louis XIII for the economy he had shown in not erecting any new buildings and even suspending the completion of these commenced before he came to the throne, he continued :—

“ This shows that he had no inclination to build, and that the finances of France will not be drained by sumptuous edifices erected by him ; unless someone wishes to reproach him with having built *the sorry Château of Versailles*, of the construction of which even a simple gentleman would not wish to boast.”

It was this “ sorry Château of Versailles ”—then a mere hunting-lodge—which, under Louis XIII’s successor, was to be transformed into the most costly and magnificent royal palace in Europe.

During the winter Bassompierre took part in a ballet organised by the King at the Louvre and the Hôtel de Ville, in which his Majesty danced himself. In this ballet, which was entitled *le Sérieux et le Grotesque*, what appeared to be a number of gigantic bottles entered from one wing and a party of Swiss officers from the other. The officers hastened eagerly towards the bottles, which, however, suddenly transformed themselves into women, whereupon the Swiss fled in alarm. But the ladies produced goblets brimming with wine, at the sight of which the officers returned, and Bassompierre,

¹ *Monsieur* was the chief president ; the others were the Cardinal de la Valette, Archbishop of Toulouse, and the Maréchal de la Force.

representing the Colonel-General of the Swiss, declaimed several stanzas in praise of Cupid and Bacchus :

“ Lorsqu’ Amour me faisait mourir,
Bacchus m’est venu secourir
Et rendre à jamais redévable ;
Et toutesfois ce petit Dieu
Dans mon cœur qu’il rend miserable
Prétend d’avoir le premier lieu.”

And so forth.

In the course of the spring an event occurred which created an immense sensation and showed that Richelieu was no respecter of persons and was resolved to enforce obedience to the royal authority, even at the expense of the noblest blood in France.

One of the greatest social evils of the age was that of duelling, which, bad as it had been in the troublous times of the last Valois, had become even worse under Henri IV, during whose reign it is computed that no less than 8,000 gentlemen lost their lives on the “field of honour.” During the early years of Louis XIII’s reign the evil continued unabated ; duels were of almost daily occurrence ; men quarrelled and fought for the most trifling difference ; they drew upon one another in the public street ; they exchanged challenges to mortal combat even in the King’s chamber. From time to time various edicts against duelling had been issued, but the penalties attaching to their infraction had been seldom enforced, and it was not until Richelieu came into power that the first serious attempt to put a stop to it was made. In March, 1626, the Cardinal persuaded the King to issue a new and severe edict against the practice, which was to be punished by confiscation of property, by exile, and, in aggravated cases, by death. At first, however, the edict would not appear to have been taken very seriously, and duels continued to be fought without any very unpleasant consequences to the offenders. But Richelieu was only waiting for a chance to make a terrible example.

In March, 1627, the Seigneur de Boutteville, a member

of the great House of Montmorency and one of the most notorious *bretteurs* of the time, had an "affair" with the Marquis de la Frette, captain of *Monsieur's* guards, in which Boutteville's second, a gentleman named Bachoy, was killed. As this was not the first occasion on which M. de Boutteville had defied the edict,¹ the King, in high indignation, ordered Bassompierre to send three companies of the Swiss Guards to invest the delinquent's château of Précy-sur-Oise, to which he was reported to have retired, and sent the Grand Provost with them to arrest him. When, however, the Grand Provost and the Swiss reached Précy, they found that their bird had flown and had taken refuge in Lorraine.

If Boutteville had had the sense to remain there until the affair had blown over, all might have been well, as in his duel with La Frette he had not been the aggressor. But, indignant at the sentence of exile which had been pronounced against him, he boasted that he would fight his next duel in the middle of the Place-Royale. This bravado he duly accomplished some weeks later, and his second, the Comte des Chapelles, killed Bussy d'Amboise, who was acting in the same capacity to Boutteville's adversary, the Marquis de Beuvron.² Beuvron fled to Italy, while Boutteville and Des Chapelles made for Lorraine; but, on their way, they stopped for a night at Vitré-le-Français, of which place Bussy d'Amboise had been governor, and the mother of the dead man, who had sent one of her servants after them, learning of their arrival, informed the authorities of the town, who caused them to be arrested.

Boutteville and Des Chapelles—the latter was also a

¹ He had fought a duel shortly before with Jacques de Matignon, Comte de Thorigny, whom he had killed. La Frette had called Boutteville out, through resentment that he had not accepted him as his second.

² This duel, like the one with La Frette, had arisen from the Thorigny affair. Beuvron was a cousin of Thorigny, and he had vowed to avenge his death.

Montmorency, on his mother's side—were conducted to the Bastille and brought to trial before the Parlement. The Procurator-General was instructed to demand the extreme penalty, and they were both condemned to death. What was more, the sentence was duly carried out, for, notwithstanding the entreaties and remonstrances of all the great nobles in France, the King, thanks to Richelieu's efforts, was inexorable, and on June 22, 1627, they were beheaded in the Place de Grève.¹

This most necessary example had, for a time, a very salutary effect, for, however reckless men might be, few cared to face the executioner's axe. But after Richelieu's death the practice was renewed, and, though it never attained to anything like the proportions it had reached in the early part of the seventeenth century, duels were still both numerous and sanguinary, as will be gathered from the fact that during the eight years of Anne of Austria's regency more than a thousand gentlemen lost their lives in them.

On May 29 *Madame* gave birth to a daughter—the celebrated Mlle. de Montpensier—"contrary to the expectation and the desire of their Majesties and of *Monsieur* her husband, who would have preferred a son." The poor lady only survived the birth of her little daughter a few days, and her death cast a gloom over the Court, and from a political point of view was most unfortunate, since it afforded Richelieu's many enemies an opportunity for fresh intrigues.

¹ Boutteville left three children: a son, François, afterwards the celebrated Maréchal de Luxembourg, and two daughters, the younger of whom, Isabelle, who was one of the most finished coquettes of her time, became Duchesse de Châtillon and was for some time the mistress of the Great Condé. The poet Charpy celebrated her charms in verses wherein he drew an ingenious comparison between the destruction wrought by her father's sword and the havoc created by the lady's *beaux yeux* :—

"Quand je vois de rapport de votre père à vous,
Divinité mortelle, adorable Sylvie !
Il tenait dans ses mains et la mort et la vie :
Vos yeux se sont acquis les mêmes sur nous,"

About the same time, news arrived of the formidable armament which Buckingham was assembling at Portsmouth, and the French Government did not doubt that the duke was meditating a descent upon the western coast of France, and that his arrival there would be the signal for the Rochellois and probably the bulk of the Huguenots to take up arms. No time, therefore, was lost in assembling an army in Poitou, and Louis XIII gave the command to *Monsieur*, and appointed Bassompierre and Schomberg as his lieutenant-generals. The King decided also to go to the West himself, and on June 28—the day after Buckingham's expedition sailed from Portsmouth—he left Paris.

On the morning of his departure, he went with Bassompierre to the Arsenal to inspect the artillery, and then proceeded to the Parlement to take leave of that body and to hold a Bed of Justice for the purpose of securing the registration of the Code Michaut.¹ At the conclusion of the ceremony Bassompierre gave him his hand to assist him to descend from his seat, upon which the King remarked: "Marshal, I have an attack of fever coming on, and did nothing but tremble the whole time I was on my Bed of Justice." "That is, nevertheless, the place where you make others tremble," replied the ready courtier; "but if that be the case, Sire, why are you going into the country with a fever upon you? Remain here for two or three days." Louis, however, declared that it was the crowd of persons who had come to take leave of him that day which had caused him to feel ill, and that, so soon as he got into the country, he would probably be better. But he told Bassompierre to send one of his servants after him to Marolles, where he was to sleep that night, and he would send him news of his health. Meantime, he was to hasten his preparations for leaving Paris, as he wished him to join him so soon as possible.

¹ So called from the Christian name—Michel—of Marillac, the Keeper of the Seals, who had compiled it.

Next day, the servant whom Bassompierre had sent after the King reported on his return that he had left his Majesty just entering his coach to go to the Château of Villeroy, and that he had bidden him inform his master that he was worse and desired him to come and see him on the morrow.

In the morning, accordingly, Bassompierre, accompanied by Guise, Chevreuse, and Saint-Luc, who had asked to come with him, started for Villeroy. On their arrival at the château they were met by Richelieu, "with whom," says the marshal, "I had fallen out a little"—who, after greeting the princes, turned to Bassompierre and said: "The King would be very pleased to see you, but he is in such a condition that the company which has come with you would inconvenience him. He has broken out in a great perspiration. That is why I advise you not to see him. I will inform him that you have come, and will convey the compliments of these princes to him." With which he went back to the King's chamber, and Bassompierre and his friends returned to Paris.

As he was leaving the château, Bassompierre learned that the Duc d'Angoulême was with the King, but he did not attach any importance to this at the time. However, the next day, in Paris, he met that prince riding in his coach, when Angoulême stopped, alighted and embraced the marshal, saying: "I bid you adieu, as I am leaving in two hours' time for Poitou." "For what purpose?" inquired Bassompierre. "To command the army there," was the reply.

Bassompierre was profoundly astonished at this news, for, if the King were too ill to continue his journey and *Monsieur* remained with him, the command of the army naturally devolved upon himself, as the senior marshal of the two lieutenant-generals who had been appointed. He felt convinced that he had been the victim of some intrigue, and this proved to be the case,

It appears that Bassompierre's conduct of his mission to England had given great dissatisfaction to the High Catholic party in France, and, in particular, to the Bishop of Mende, who complained bitterly that the marshal had blamed his conduct generally, and several of his actions in particular, during the time that he had been Grand Almoner to Henrietta Maria. This prelate, in consequence, had conceived the bitterest hatred of Bassompierre, and, to avenge himself, was doing everything in his power to injure him with Richelieu, whose relative and protégé he was.

In this he had succeeded, the more easily since Richelieu invariably looked with a jaundiced eye upon those who enjoyed the personal friendship of the King, and had apparently persuaded the Cardinal that Bassompierre had become on such intimate terms with Buckingham and other English statesmen during his embassy, that he ought to be regarded with distrust. The consequence was that when, on Louis XIII being taken ill, Angoulême, who entertained an absurdly exaggerated idea of his military capacity, had suggested that, since *Monsieur* would, of course, remain with his Majesty, he should be sent to Poitou to organise the army there, on the ground that it consisted largely of light cavalry, of which he was Colonel, he supported this proposal, although he was well aware that the prince hoped that his temporary command would become a permanent one.

The King objected. "And Bassompierre," said he, "what will he do? Is he not my lieutenant-general?" "Yes, Sire," answered the Cardinal; "but since he has never been of opinion that the English would make a descent on France, he will not be so solicitous to place your army in a fit state to take the field; and M. d'Angoulême does not pretend to any command—as he will tell you himself—and will retire so soon as your Majesty arrives, knowing well that the command belongs by right to the marshals of France." Angoulême was

then admitted, and, after some further persuasion, the King yielded and signed an order giving him command of the army.

In the course of the next few days Louis XIII became so ill that his physicians were seriously alarmed, and it was deemed advisable for the two Queens to proceed to Villeroy and establish themselves at the château. Bassompierre, however, did not again visit the King, "contenting himself with sending every day to learn news of his health," apparently because he feared that his presence at Villeroy might give umbrage to the Cardinal. The Duc de Guise, however, was a frequent visitor, and one day the King called him to his bedside and said: "M. du Bois"—he often called Bassompierre by this name, though why the marshal does not tell us—"is angry with me; but he is under a wrong impression. I beg you to bring him with you the next time you come, and tell him this from me."

Accordingly, a day or two later, Bassompierre went with the duke to Villeroy; but Richelieu accompanied him into the King's chamber, and the Queen-Mother came in shortly afterwards, and he had no opportunity of speaking to his Majesty. However, while his mother and Richelieu were at dinner, the King sent Roger, his first valet of his Wardrobe, to request Bassompierre to return, when he told him that he did wrong to be annoyed because he had sent Angoulême to Poitou; that he had been forced to do so; that he had not entrusted him with any powers; and that, so soon as his health would permit him to travel to the army, he intended to revoke the commission which he had given the prince, and place the troops under the marshal's orders. Upon which Bassompierre assured him, like a true courtier, that "he was not troubling himself about the matter; that he could think of nothing for the moment but his Majesty's health (for the restoration of which he was offering up constant prayers to God), and that, being his creature, he

approved everything that he did, though it were to his own prejudice."

Notwithstanding these assurances, however, it is evident that the marshal was deeply mortified at seeing himself superseded.

In the afternoon of July 10, the English expedition, which consisted of forty-two ships-of-war and thirty-four transports, with 6,000 infantry and 100 cavalry on board, arrived off Saint-Martin-de-Ré, the principal town of the Ile de Ré, opposite La Rochelle. If Buckingham had made his descent upon Fort Louis, as the Huguenots who accompanied him desired, this fortress, shut in between the English and the Rochellois, must inevitably have been captured, as Toiras, who, on the death of the Maréchal de Praslin in the preceding year, had succeeded him as governor of Aunis, had withdrawn the greater part of its garrison to strengthen Saint-Martin-de-Ré, and the result of the fall of Fort-Louis would have been disastrous to France. But the Rochellois had so far refused to commit themselves definitely to an alliance with England ; and, apart from this, there were reasons which made Buckingham particularly anxious to get possession of Ré. If it should fall into English hands, it would be a veritable thorn in the side of French, and to a less degree of Spanish, commerce, since its ports within the still waters of the straits which divided it from the mainland would afford an admirable lair for privateers ; while its proximity to the Protestant populations of South-Western France would open the door to a skilful use of religious and political intrigue. Its salt marshes, moreover, would afford a very valuable source of revenue to the English exchequer.

On the morning of the 12th a council of war was held, as a result of which it was decided that Sir William Becher, accompanied by Soubise and an agent of Rohan, should proceed to La Rochelle to ascertain whether the citizens were prepared to accept the hand which his Britannic

Majesty was holding out to them, and that the troops should be landed at once.

Toiras had collected about 1,000 foot and 200 horse to oppose the landing, which began about five o'clock in the afternoon, under cover of the fire from the ships. There was a painful lack of discipline amongst the troops, which was not surprising, considering that they were chiefly composed of raw material ; and the first boatloads which disembarked gathered in clusters along the beaches instead of falling into line. Buckingham, cudgel in hand, hurried up and down "beating some and threatening others" ; but when two regiments were on shore, he was obliged to return to the fleet to do the like there, as some of the troops showed a marked disinclination to leave the shelter of the ships.

Hardly had he reached it, when Toiras, perceiving his opportunity, launched his cavalry upon the disorderly groups on the beach, and, despite the efforts of their officers to rally them, drove them headlong into the sea. Had the French cavalry been properly supported by their infantry, the two regiments must have been destroyed or captured almost to a man ; but the infantry were far behind, and, meantime, Buckingham, who, with all his faults, lacked neither courage nor energy, perceiving what had happened, hurried back, and by his exertions, aided by those of their officers, succeeded in rallying the fugitives and forming them into line. Reinforcements were landed, and, after some fierce fighting, numbers prevailed, and the French were obliged to retreat to Saint-Martin. The English lost about 500 men, the French about 400, including a number of nobles and gentlemen, amongst whom were a younger brother of Toiras and the Baron de Chantal, father of Madame de Sévigné.

While this combat was in progress on the shore of the Île de Ré, Sir William Becher and Soubise had arrived at La Rochelle. They found the gates shut, however ; and it was only when the dowager Duchess of Rohan, who was

immensely popular with the Rochellois, went out to meet her son and the envoy of Buckingham and demanded that they should be admitted, that they were allowed to enter the town, "to the great joy of the people, but against the will of the mayor and those who governed." Having been conducted to the Hôtel de Ville, Becher offered the authorities of the town, in the name of Charles I, powerful support on land and sea against the tyranny of their own Government, provided that they would engage to make no treaty without the advice and consent of the King of England, "promising the same on his part." The municipality replied that they thanked the King of England for his sympathy with the Protestants of France, but that La Rochelle was only one of the Reformed Churches and could not come to a decision except in concert with the others.

The middle classes, in fact, not only at La Rochelle, but in the other Huguenot towns of France, feared war. The party had now only two chiefs, Rohan and his brother Soubise. Bouillon was dead ; Sully was old and less than ever disposed to revolt ; La Force and Châtillon had accepted the bâton of marshal of France as the price of their loyalty ; La Trémoille was about to change his religion. The nobles were deserting the cause. The revolt was, besides, difficult to justify. Louis XIII had certainly refused to demolish Fort Louis, but he had only promised to do so when he should judge its maintenance to be no longer necessary ; while the fortifications recently constructed on Richelieu's advice at Brouage, Marans, and on the îles de Ré and d'Oléron, might be explained as much as by fear of the English as by hostility towards La Rochelle. The most clear-sighted amongst the citizens felt that the Government entertained hostile intentions, but their apprehensions were their only proofs.

The Protestants of the South were as undecided as those of La Rochelle. Rohan, determined on war, did not venture to convene a General Assembly of the

Churches, but contented himself with summoning deputies from the Cévennes, and those towns of Lower Languedoc upon whose support he could rely, to meet at Uzès. This assembly, inflamed by the duke's exhortations, invited him to resume the post of general-in-chief of the Protestant forces, and decreed the taking up of arms and an alliance with England. At the same time, the deputies "solemnly protested before God that they wished to live and die in obedience to the King, their legitimate and natural prince." Rohan hoped, by the example of these towns, to draw the rest of the Reformed Churches into the struggle; but in this he was disappointed, as most of them condemned his action and decided to stand aloof.

Having landed the remainder of his troops, with the artillery and stores, an operation which was conducted in so leisurely a manner that it occupied several days, Buckingham advanced upon Saint-Martin, occupied the town without opposition, and proceeded to reconnoitre the citadel, a recently-constructed fortress of considerable strength crowning a steep rock above the town. He would have well been advised had he begun by the reduction of La. Prée, a small fortress to the south-east of Saint-Martin, but this he neglected to do. It was an omission which he subsequently had good reason to regret.

Buckingham and his officers at first believed that in a short time they would be able to reduce Saint-Martin; but ere many days had passed they were of a different opinion. The place was strongly garrisoned and vigorously defended, while the surrounding soil was rocky and ill-suited for siege operations. They were therefore obliged to convert the siege into a blockade, with the object of starving the garrison out; and, since it was recognised that it would be very difficult to effect this in the face of the threatened succour from the French army gathering on the mainland, unless reinforcements and stores could soon arrive from England, Becher was sent

home to explain the situation and press for their despatch.

By the middle of August the works surrounding Saint-Martin had been completed. On the side of the sea, the approach to the fort was guarded by the English ships, disposed in the form of a half-moon, and by about a score of well-armed shallop, which at night lay close under the citadel. Buckingham had also devised an additional means of strengthening the blockade by throwing a boom across the waterway made of great masts, supported at the end by small boats.

For some time those about the person of Louis XIII did not venture to break the news of Buckingham's descent upon Ré to the sick monarch, from fear of aggravating his malady, and, when they did so, they minimised the importance of the affair as much as possible. *Monsieur* was impatient to go to the army and was bitterly incensed against Richelieu, who declined to advise the King to let him do so, until his Majesty was convalescent. When, however, the King grew better, he accorded *Monsieur* the permission he desired; but scarcely had he departed than Louis, "jealous of the glory which his brother might acquire," sent a messenger after him to recall him. Finally, however, at the intercession of the Queen-Mother, he was allowed to continue his journey.

Although a small band of ardent spirits had made their way from La Rochelle to Ré and joined Buckingham, the authorities of the town had not yet accepted the English alliance, and still remained nominally loyal to their sovereign. As a precautionary measure, however, *Monsieur* and Angoulême had already invested La Rochelle, on its southern side, their headquarters being at Aytré—often written Nétré by contemporary writers—about a league from the town.

Towards the end of August, Louis XIII was sufficiently recovered to remove to Saint-Germain. He had declared

his intention of joining the army and personally superintending the measures being taken for the relief of Saint-Martin so soon as he was strong enough to mount his horse, and, in the second week of September, he sent for Bassompierre and told him to prepare to accompany him to La Rochelle in five days' time. Bassompierre inquired "in what quality his Majesty was pleased that he should accompany him." The King replied that he would, of course, do so as his lieutenant-general, upon which Bassompierre pointed out that the Duc d'Angoulême occupied that position, and that, since the army, when the King was present, had never yet been commanded except by marshals of France, "he begged him very humbly not to take him there to put an affront upon his office." Louis declared that Angoulême's command was but a temporary one, and that he intended to send him an order to retire; but Bassompierre, who knew how easily Richelieu could persuade the King to go back on his word, asked if the King would direct the Cardinal to give him an assurance that the prince should not continue in the command, since his Eminence, having advised the appointment, might wish to retain him. This Louis promised, and, a day or two later, gave the marshal the assurance he desired.

The King left Saint-Germain on September 17 and travelled by easy stages towards the West. Bassompierre remained in Paris until the end of the month, when he received a message from Louis telling him to follow him as quickly as possible. He set out at once and joined the King and the Cardinal at the Château of Saumery, near Blois. They both received him most cordially and told him that the King had sent orders to Angoulême to leave the army and join his Majesty at Saumur.

Although obliged to remain near the person of the King, Richelieu had practically assumed the direction of the military operations. All his efforts were at present directed towards the re-victualling of Saint-Martin-de-

Ré, the situation of which was rapidly becoming desperate. His ecclesiastical lieutenants, the Bishops of Maillezais and Mende, the Abbé de Marsillac and Père Placide de Brémond, a Benedictine monk, who entitled himself the "Knight of the Crusade," hurried from one harbour to another along the coast, assembling shallop and flat-bottomed boats, arming them, loading them with stores, and despatching them towards Ré. "I swear to you," wrote the Cardinal to his brother-in-law, the Marquis de Brézé, "that I would as lief die as see M. de Toiras perish from want of provisions."

At Langeais, where the King arrived on October 4, he received news from *Monsieur* that the garrison of Saint-Martin was reduced to such straits¹ that it was impossible for them to hold out for more than another week. Louis, in great distress, thereupon proceeded to the church of Notre-Dame-des-Ardilliers, which belonged to the Oratorians, and was held in great veneration in all the country round, to offer up prayers for the relief of his brave soldiers.

On the following day they arrived at Saumur, where, to the great satisfaction of Bassompierre, the King informed Angoulême, who had come to meet him, that so soon as he (the King) reached La Rochelle, he would have to resign his post of lieutenant-general and content himself with that of Colonel of the Light Cavalry.

On the 8th Bassompierre left his Majesty to pay a visit to his friend Bertrand d'Eschaux, Archbishop of Tours, at the Abbey of l'Hort de Poitiers, but rejoined him next day at Niort, where good news awaited him.

¹ The news of the condition to which the garrison was reduced had been brought to Fort Louis by a soldier named La Pierre, one of three volunteers who had offered to make an attempt to swim across to the mainland. Of his two companions, one was drowned and the other from exhaustion obliged to surrender to the English. La Pierre himself had a narrow escape from being captured, as he was sighted by some English sailors in a boat and hotly pursued; but, by repeatedly diving, he contrived to elude them. Louis XIII subsequently rewarded his brave deed by a pension of 100 crowns.

On the night of the 7th-8th, a flotilla of thirty-five boats and small vessels, laden with men and provisions which had been collected at the Sables d'Olonne, had set out to make an attempt to run the blockade, to the cry of "*Passer ou mourir*," and, aided by the darkness of the night and a strong north-west wind, the great majority of them had succeeded in getting through the English fleet and in bringing to the famished defenders of Saint-Martin-de-Ré a reinforcement of 400 men and provisions for a month.

This success turned the tables on the besiegers, who were themselves running short of food, while sickness was making such havoc in their ranks that there were now only 5,000 men fit for duty. The French forces, too, were gathering on the mainland, and an attempt to relieve the fort might be expected at any moment. In these circumstances, it had already been decided to raise the siege, when news arrived that an expedition under Lord Holland, which Charles I had, after infinite difficulties, at length succeeded in organising, was on the point of sailing from Plymouth, while, at the same time, the Rochellois, after two months of tergiversations, decided to throw in their lot with the Protestants of the South and the English, and signed a treaty with Buckingham.¹

On the 11th Louis XIII reached Surgères, where he was met by his brother, Angoulême, and Louis de Marillac. *Monsieur* spoke to the King in favour of Angoulême, and recommended that he should be allowed to retain his command, and "*M. d' Angoulême recommended himself*." But the King replied that he had appointed Bassompierre and Schomberg as lieutenant-generals of his army and that he could not do anything to their prejudice. However, as it was known that his Majesty

¹ Their negotiator and admiral Guiton stipulated that the English should not retain the Île de Ré or any fortified place on the coast after the termination of hostilities. Thus La Rochelle, as Michelet with justice observes, remained faithful at heart to France.



GEORGE VILLIERS, FIRST DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

After the picture by Gerard Honthorst in the National Portrait Gallery.
(Photo by Emery Walker).

was seldom in the same mind for two days together, except when Richelieu had made it up for him—and they believed that the Cardinal was none too well disposed towards Bassompierre—Angoulême's friends continued to press his claims.

The following day the King took up his quarters at Aytré, *Monsieur* having removed to the Château of Dompierre, to the north-east of La Rochelle, on the road between that town and Niort, and, to the intense mortification of Bassompierre, who had flattered himself that the matter was settled, his first business was to hold a council to discuss the position of Angoulême. The Council summoned the duke before it and called upon him to state his case, when he declared that, having served the King faithfully as lieutenant-general for three months, he would regard it as an affront if he were called upon to resign in favour of the Maréchaux de Bassompierre and de Schomberg, who, while he had been enduring all the toils and hardships of active service, had been passing their time agreeably in Paris; that he could see no reason why he should not be associated with them in the command, unless it were the enmity which the Maréchal de Bassompierre bore him, because he happened to be the half-brother of Mlle. d'Entragues, and that he did not believe that the Maréchal de Schomberg would make any difficulty were it not that he was instigated thereto by his colleague. And he cited various precedents to show that marshals of France had several times served under Princes of the Blood.

Angoulême then withdrew, and the King sent for Bassompierre and Schomberg, who had been waiting in an adjoining room, and Richelieu having read to them the substance of the duke's speech, invited them to reply. Bassompierre, as the senior of the two marshals, thereupon rose and harangued the Council at great length—his speech occupies several pages of his *Mémoires*—maintaining that his Majesty had repeatedly assured him

that M. Angoulême's command was to be but a temporary one and that he would be removed so soon as the King joined the army ; that it was contrary to all precedent for anyone but marshals of France to command, or to be associated in the command of, an army when the Sovereign was present, and that, though it was certainly true, as M. d'Angoulême had stated, that marshals had served under Princes of the Blood, they had never done so when the King had been with the army. Finally, he declared that rather than acquiesce in so great a degradation of his office, he would prefer to lay down the bâton which the King had given him and return to Paris, “ to live the life of a citizen, while awaiting the honour of his Majesty's commands to serve him in some other capacity.”

It is a singular illustration of the morals of the time to find Bassompierre, in the course of this speech, making the following reference to his former relations with Marie d'Entragues :—

“ He [Angoulême] has done very wrong to say that I wish him ill on account of his sister. That would be, on the contrary, a reason why I should wish him well. I seek with too much care the affection of the relatives of the ladies with whom I am in love. I might have wished him ill if he had done to my sister what I have done to his ; but he does not practise the same thing on others, from fear of having too many enemies on his hands.”

Schomberg followed in much the same strain as his colleague, after which the two marshals withdrew and went to inspect the Fort d'Orléans, a partially-finished work which Angoulême had erected near the point of Coreilles, to the south-east of La Rochelle. On their return to Aytré the King inquired of Bassompierre what he thought of Fort d'Orléans. The marshal replied that it was “ a useless work, situated in the most unsuitable spot that could have been chosen in all Coreilles, three times as large as was necessary, badly constructed, a

great expense, and of little profit, built not according to the rules which ought to be observed in constructing a fort intended only to serve during a siege, but as a permanent work, and, in short, defective as a whole and in every part." The King then told him that he spoke thus out of professional jealousy, and that, if he himself had caused this fort to be constructed, he would find as many reasons to praise it as he now found to condemn it. Bassompierre retorted that he was not so foolish as to condemn a work which the King could go and judge of himself, and that he saw clearly that his Majesty had changed his mind and intended to support the pretensions of M. d'Angoulême. The King replied that he had not changed his mind, but that he would be very pleased if the marshal could accommodate himself to an arrangement which would be for the good of his service.

That night Angoulême sent two of his friends, Louis de Marillac and the Marquis de Vignolles, to Schomberg to endeavour to persuade him to accept the prince as his colleague in the command of the army. If we are to believe Bassompierre, they pointed out to Schomberg that if Bassompierre were to carry out his threat to retire, he would have all the power in the army, since Angoulême pretended only to the rank of lieutenant-general and would never dream of disputing his authority, whereas, if Bassompierre, who was the second marshal of France, a favourite of the King, and very popular with officers and soldiers alike, were to remain, he would occupy a subordinate position ; and that, by these insidious arguments, they succeeded in so inflaming the marshal's ambition that, regardless alike of his honour, the dignity of his office, and the claims of friendship, he consented to what they proposed.

However that may be, next morning Schomberg went to the King and informed him that he was prepared to accept Angoulême as his colleague in the lieutenancy-general of the army, since he was already established in

that post, adding that he considered that Bassompierre had been very ill-advised to contest the point so warmly.

An hour or two later, when Bassompierre went to the King's quarters to accompany him to Le Plomb, some two leagues to the north of La Rochelle, where a fine view of the English fleet and Saint-Martin-de-Ré was obtainable, his Majesty received him very coldly and avoided speaking to him ; and he learned that Louis had complained to *Monsieur*, the Cardinal, and others that his obstinacy was hindering the operations of the army. Before they left Aytré, Du Hallier came up to Bassompierre and told him that he had been sent by the King to persuade him to be reconciled to M. d'Angoulême. This the marshal refused to hear of, and told Du Hallier that it was his intention to retire from the army two days later.

On the way to Le Plomb, Richelieu also spoke to the marshal on the subject, and then Schomberg rode up, and counselled him to yield to the King's wishes, " like a good courtier." Upon which Bassompierre angrily declared that " though his King and his master might abandon him, his friends betray him, and his colleague, united to him by the same interest, leave him, he would not abandon or betray himself," and that he (Schomberg) might, if it pleased him, remain with infamy, but, for himself, he preferred to retire with honour.

On the following day Bassompierre learned that the King had directed *Monsieur*, the titular general of the Royal army, to inform the two marshals that he had decided that the Duc d'Angoulême was to serve conjointly with them. Bassompierre declared that he absolutely refused to be associated with M. d'Angoulême, and next morning the disgruntled veteran presented himself before the King and addressed his Majesty as follows :—

" Sire, in order to avoid doing anything unworthy of myself, and which might do injury to the office of marshal of France, with which you have honoured me, I am

obliged, with an extreme regret, to retire from your army and to beg your Majesty very humbly to permit me to leave it. I am going to Paris to wait until the honour of your commands summons me to some place where I may be able to continue the same very humble services which I have performed in the past, demanding meanwhile, as a special favour, that you will not give credence to the evil reports which my enemies will spread abroad concerning me, until you have proved them to be true. For myself, I shall assure you that I shall be in the future what I have been in the past, to wit, your very humble and very faithful creature."

Louis XIII must have had some little difficulty in preserving his gravity during this grandiloquent oration. He had, however, not the least intention of dispensing with the marshal's military services, which he valued highly, and he knew that his retirement would create an exceedingly bad impression in the army, where he enjoyed great popularity. He was, besides, attached to Bassompierre, so far as his cold nature permitted him to be attached to anyone, and his lively company would contribute not a little to relieve the monotony of the long and tedious siege upon which he was about to enter. He therefore endeavoured to persuade him to remain and accept Angoulême as his colleague, and then, "perceiving that he was unable to conquer him," bade him adieu, after having first made him promise that he would go and see the Cardinal. He then sent one of his gentlemen to Richelieu with instructions to induce Bassompierre to remain at any cost.

When the marshal arrived at Richelieu's quarters, the Cardinal received him with a great display of affection and "even shed tears," after which he begged him to name the terms on which he would consent to continue to give his Majesty the benefit of his military services. Bassompierre replied that under no consideration would he prejudice the dignity of his office by being associated

with Angoulême, but that if he were willing to give him a separate army, quite distinct from that of the King, with his own artillery, commissariat and so forth, to besiege La Rochelle on the other side of the canal, he would remain. The Cardinal embraced him, assured him that he would give him all he demanded, and asked him to name the troops of which he desired his force to be composed ; and the same day he was appointed to the command of an army, composed of three companies of the Swiss Guards, the Navarre Regiment, and five other regiments, *Monsieur's* company of gendarmes and six companies of light cavalry, together with the garrison of Fort Louis. His headquarters were to be at Laleu, a village situated about a league and a half to the north-west of La Rochelle.

This arrangement, so far as Bassompierre was concerned, was a very satisfactory termination to the dispute ; but, by accepting a separate command, he lost a far greater opportunity for military distinction than had yet come his way. For the task of relieving Saint-Martin-de-Ré and driving Buckingham from the island was entrusted by the King to Schomberg, whereas if Bassompierre had consented to serve as lieutenant-general, it would certainly have been given to him, as the senior of the two marshals. It was a heavy price to pay for the gratification of his *amour-propre*.

Bassompierre established himself at Laleu on October 23, where three days later he held a review of his army, several hundred men from which were subsequently detached to go with Schomberg to the Île de Ré. At the beginning of November, while returning from a visit to the King at Aytré, he fell into an ambuscade which the Rochellois had laid for his benefit. His usual good fortune, however, did not desert him and he succeeded in effecting his escape.

A day or two later news arrived of the death of the Maréchal de Thémire, who had succeeded the imprisoned

Duc de Vendôme as Governor of Brittany. The King offered the vacant post to Bassompierre, but, though this most important and lucrative office, which until the disgrace of Vendôme had generally been reserved for a Prince of the Blood, might well have tempted him, the marshal refused it. "I told him," he says, "that I rendered very humble thanks for the honour which he did me in deeming me worthy of it, but that, for my part, I did not desire these great governments, which obliged me to reside there, because they were not suited to my disposition and would divert me from the course of my fortune."

Meantime, the situation of Buckingham's army in the Île de Ré was becoming every day more difficult and perilous. It is true that since the treaty which the duke had signed with La Rochelle, a great number of their sick and wounded had been admitted to that town, and they were better provided with provisions; but the weather was cold and wet, and the troops suffered severely in consequence. What was worse was that by October 20 more than 2,000 French troops had succeeded in getting across to the island from the mainland, and had been received within the walls of Fort La Prée and the entrenchments which had been thrown up in front of it, and their numbers might be expected to increase every day.

Everything now depended upon the arrival of Holland. If he arrived before the French in the island were sufficiently numerous to take the offensive, and Buckingham succeeded meantime in preventing Saint-Martin from being again revictualled, the place must fall, for by the second week in November he calculated that the provisions of the garrison would be exhausted. If, however, Holland's arrival were delayed beyond the first days of that month, he dared not, with his steadily dwindling forces, take the risk of having to give battle to superior numbers and would be obliged to abandon the enterprise.

Buckingham and his officers "blinded themselves with looking" for the first signs of the coming of Holland's fleet, but it came not. Endless difficulties had to be surmounted before it was ready to start, for men were hard to obtain and money still harder, and those charged with the fitting out of the expedition were deficient in both capacity and energy, though the King and Holland appear to have done their utmost to spur them on. At last, on October 19, Holland, with part of the expedition, sailed from Portsmouth, but was driven back to the coast by a storm. For ten days the wind blew strongly from the South-West ; then on the 29th it changed, and the fleet again set sail, this time from Plymouth. But in the night a violent westerly gale came on, and it was again forced to return, with some of the ships severely damaged.

Before the end of the first week of November, Buckingham, obliged to recognise that his position was fast becoming untenable, reluctantly yielded to the counsels of those who urged him to raise the siege. He could not, however, bring himself to abandon the prey which had been so nearly his, without one last attempt to seize it ; and learning that Toiras had but 500 men left capable of bearing arms, he determined to endeavour to carry the place by assault, notwithstanding that almost from the first an assault had been regarded as a hopeless operation.

The attempt was made on the morning of November 6. The raw troops who had landed in the island in July were by this time seasoned soldiers, and they advanced to the attack gallantly enough. But Toiras had been forewarned, probably owing to Buckingham's want of reticence ; and the assailants were received with a murderous fire, while huge stones were rained down upon them as they clambered up the rocky slope on which the fortress stood. When they reached the walls, their scaling-ladders were found to be too short ; the troops from La Prée came out to threaten their rear, and they were obliged to retreat with the loss of several hundred men.

During the following night, Schomberg, who had been waiting his opportunity for some days, sailed out of the Charente, evaded the English fleet and disembarked at Sainte-Marie, in the south-east of Ré, with his relieving army. Then, having been joined by the troops at La Prée, at the head of over 6,000 men he advanced towards Saint-Martin. Buckingham, however, had already raised the siege and retreated towards the Île de Loix, a narrow tongue of land separated from the rest of Ré by marshes and a canal, where he intended to re-embark.

On Schomberg's arrival at Saint-Martin, Toiras at once proposed that he should join him with all his men who were fit to take the field, and that they should follow and attack the English at once, declaring that the enemy was so demoralised and enfeebled by sickness that, in that case, not one of them would escape. Louis de Marillac, who commanded under Schomberg, strongly opposed this suggestion, and, though finally it was decided to follow Toiras's advice, so much time had been lost in disputing that the greater part of Buckingham's army had already gained the Île de Loix. The rearguard, however, were still defiling across a narrow wooden bridge which had been thrown across the marshes and the canal which separated Ré from the Île de Loix ; and the French generals saw at a glance that, owing to the carelessness with which the preparations for retreat had been made, these hapless troops were entirely at their mercy.

An entrenchment had been constructed on the further side of the bridge, but, by some blunder, the causeway which led to the bridge was quite unguarded, except by a handful of cavalry. The French horse, who outnumbered this detachment by nearly four to one, charged and routed it, and the flying cavalry, galloping wildly towards the bridge, threw the infantry into hopeless confusion. Almost simultaneously a body of French infantry fell on the rear of the troops crossing the bridge, who were, of course, unable to offer any effective resistance. It was a massacre

rather than a fight. Hundreds were killed, while a great number fell from the bridge, which was unprotected by a parapet, and were drowned. The troops who had been detached to guard the entrenchment on the Île de Loix were at first borne away by the rout ; but they soon rallied and drove back the enemy, and when night fell were still in possession. Next morning the bridge was destroyed, and the remnant of Buckingham's unfortunate army re-embarked without any interference from the French.

The English losses in this lamentable affair have been variously stated, but Bassompierre's estimate of 1,200, which includes prisoners, is probably well within the mark. What is certain is that, although on October 20 6,884 men drew pay at Saint-Martin-de-Ré, only 2,989 were landed at Portsmouth and Plymouth three weeks later.

More than forty English standards which had been captured were displayed amid great rejoicings in Notre Dame on Christmas Day ; and Paris saw in it a proud victory over her rival, on that rival's own element.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Siege of La Rochelle begins—Immense difficulties of the undertaking—Unwillingness of the great nobles to see the Huguenot party entirely crushed—Remark of Bassompierre—Courage and energy of Richelieu—His measures to provide for the welfare and efficiency of the besieging army—The lines of circumvallation—Erection of the Fort of La Fons by Bassompierre—The construction of the mole is begun and proceeded with in the face of great difficulties—Responsibilities of Bassompierre—The Duc d'Angoulême accuses the marshal of a gross piece of negligence, but the latter succeeds in turning the tables upon his accuser—Louis XIII returns to Paris, leaving Richelieu with the title of "Lieutenant-General of the Army"—Critical state of affairs in Italy—Unsuccessful attempts to take La Rochelle by surprise—Intrigues of Marie de' Medici and the High Catholic party against Richelieu—The King rejoins the army—Guiton elected Mayor of La Rochelle.

THE departure of the English left Richelieu face to face with La Rochelle, "like a lion with his prey." But the Cardinal was well aware that it was a prey which could not be secured without a long and terrible struggle. With its strong walls, covered on two sides by marshes and on a third by the harbour, and its brave and hardy population, largely composed of seafaring men inured to perils and hardships, La Rochelle was one of the most difficult places to subdue which it was possible to imagine. Old men remembered how the Duc d'Anjou (afterwards Henri III) had besieged the town for months after the St. Bartholomew, and had had nothing to show for his trouble but the graves of 20,000 of his soldiers, and predicted that Louis XIII and Richelieu would meet with no better fate. In fact, so long as La Rochelle retained command of the sea, it was deemed impregnable.

Richelieu, appreciating the immense difficulties of the enterprise, would fain have avoided it altogether ; but the alliance of the Rochellois with the English had left him no alternative, and, once committed to it, he was resolved

to carry it through, cost what it might. For this siege, in which, as he said, "he had to conquer three kings, those of France, England, and Spain," he set aside all other work, and concentrated upon it all the resources of his genius. For this he closed his eyes momentarily to the death-struggles in Germany, to the Austrian menace on the eastern frontier, and to the intrigues of the Dukes of Savoy and Lorraine, and contented himself with merely holding Rohan's rebellion in the South in check the while he was preparing to strike his decisive blows elsewhere.

The Cardinal had recognised, in arriving before La Rochelle, that it would be necessary for him to supervise everything himself, and that the obstacles which he would have to overcome were well-nigh as formidable in the Royal camp as in those of the enemy. The majority of the great nobles, by whom the Cardinal was feared and disliked, did not wish to see the Huguenot party completely crushed, foreseeing that, when this was accomplished, Richelieu would assuredly proceed to curtail their own power ; and Bassompierre undoubtedly voiced their opinion when he exclaimed one day, laughing : " We shall be very foolish to take La Rochelle." Bassompierre was too loyal a servant of the Crown not to do his duty as a soldier, whatever opinions he might hold ; but there were others who were more logical, and already, during the siege of Saint-Martin-de-Ré, the conduct of more than one officer and more than one army-contractor had been distinctly suspicious. This ill-will would, unless effective means were taken to frustrate it, undoubtedly manifest itself on a much greater scale as time went on, and would not fail to take advantage of the least checks and the least sufferings to spread discouragement throughout the army.

Richelieu faced the situation boldly and resolved to attack the evil at its root. He secured the good-will and confidence of the people of the surrounding country, and assured the provisioning of the camp, by an ordinance

which forbade the soldiers, under pain of death, to take away the cattle of the peasants or to interfere with the work in the fields, and instituted a special commission to receive the complaints of the peasants against the military. He gained, at the same time, the affection of the soldiers by the solicitude which he showed for their welfare, arranging with the neighbouring towns for the supply of winter clothing for the whole army and directing that the men should receive their pay each week from the commissaries of the Treasury, instead of allowing the money to pass, as had hitherto been the custom, through the hands of the captains of companies, in which a good proportion of it invariably remained. Thus, the company-officers were no longer able to defraud the soldier of his pay or to deceive the Ministers or the generals as to the number of effectives who were serving under them ; and, thanks to this precaution and the rigorous surveillance exercised over the treasurers and contractors, the army employed at the siege of La Rochelle, though larger than that which had besieged Montauban five years before, did not cost the State even half as much. Never had a French army taken the field in which the soldiers were better cared for or better disciplined ; never had the country surrounding a beleaguered town been less harried and annoyed. The camp, in fact, was a pattern of all the military virtues, which Richelieu afterwards himself compared to a “well-ordered convent.” The comparison seems to have been justified by the swarm of Capuchins who descended upon the Royal army in the train of Richelieu’s confidant, the celebrated Père Joseph —“*Son Eminence grise*”—to catechise the soldiers, and by the group of warlike prelates—the Bishops of Maillezais, Mende, Nîmes, and others—whom the Cardinal gathered round him to aid him in the surveillance of the officers and contractors.

While the welfare and efficiency of the army was thus being provided for, the siege was being busily pressed on.

Lines of circumvallation three leagues in extent, flanked by eleven forts and eighteen redoubts, were undertaken, with the object of cutting off all approach to La Rochelle on the land side. One of the most important was the Fort of La Fons, to the north of the town, which was intended to intercept the supply of pure water. On November 18 Louis XIII sent for Bassompierre and informed him that he and the Cardinal were most anxious that a fort should be constructed at La Fons. So soon as possible *Monsieur* had charged himself with this task, but, as he had left the army and returned to Paris, the King had requested Angoulême to undertake it. That prince, however, was unwilling to do so, unless he could have a force of 500 horse and 5,000 foot at his disposal, as he felt certain that the besieged would make the most determined efforts to prevent the construction of the fort. It would be very difficult to spare so many troops, and the King had therefore sent for Bassompierre to ascertain whether he would undertake the work and what reinforcements he would require for the purpose. The marshal replied that he would not require any, and that he would engage that the approach to La Rochelle on that side should be effectually closed within a fortnight. The King appeared to think that Bassompierre was jesting, and asked if three more regiments and three companies of light cavalry would be enough. The marshal answered that, if his Majesty insisted on reinforcing him, he must decline to undertake the affair; that on the morrow he would survey the ground and trace out the fort, on the following day make his preparations, and on the next take up his quarters there and begin the work. Louis inquired what force he proposed to employ, and, on being told that 400 infantry and 40 horse were all that he should take, " told him that he was making game of him and that he would not suffer him to do it." The marshal said that, in that case, the King had better entrust the work to someone else, as he declined to employ another man beyond the

number he had mentioned. Finally, the King allowed him to have his way, recommending him, however, to take every precaution.

It is probable that Bassompierre would not have been nearly so ready to offer to undertake under the protection of a few hundred men a dangerous and important duty, for which ordinary prudence would have enjoined the employment of a very considerable force, had not Angoulême been present at the Council and the temptation to humiliate that prince proved too great to resist. He had reckoned, however, on his long experience of war to enable him to deceive an enemy who could possess little or no knowledge of the ruses of the battlefield, and he judged rightly. The spot where he proposed to construct his fort was flanked by two sunken roads, and at the head of each of these roads he erected a barricade, which he lined with troops, while the rest of his force he disposed in the space between them. The Rochellois sallied out to the number of 1,000 or 1,200 men, but, finding themselves confronted by several hundred soldiers, concluded that they formed but the advance-guard of a large force which lay concealed in the sunken roads behind the barricades, and did not venture to attack, contenting themselves with a cannonade, which did but little damage. Thus the resourceful Bassompierre was able to carry out the work entrusted to him with the loss of very few men, and was highly complimented by the King on his success.

The lines of circumvallation were, however, of but secondary importance, for there was no serious attack to be feared from the Huguenots of the South. It was not the land but the sea which it was necessary to close at any price, for it was impossible to believe that the English, more exasperated than dejected by the reverse they had sustained, would not sooner or later make a vigorous effort to succour the metropolis of French Protestantism. They were, indeed, in honour bound to come to the

assistance of the Rochellois, since it was they who had drawn them into revolt.

In 1621 an Italian engineer had conceived a project of blocking the canal of La Rochelle ; but the means which he proposed—an elaborated floating bar, an iron chain laid across vessels and rafts, and stretching from shore to shore—was found insufficient.

However, at the end of November, another scheme was mooted.

“ *Saturday, the 27th [November],*” writes Bassompierre, “ two master masons or architects of Paris, the one named Métezeau, the other Tiriot,¹ came to propose to construct a mole of solid stone in the canal of La Rochelle, in order to close it. The Cardinal sent them to me, and I approved their project, which had already been proposed to the King by Beaulieu.”²

It was accordingly decided to undertake the gigantic task of blocking up the canal with solid masonry. From the point of Coreilles, which was beyond the range of the cannon of La Rocheille, a mole was to be thrown out some seven hundred paces towards the opposite shore, where Bassompierre commanded ; whence, to meet it, another mole of four hundred paces was to be constructed. The whole breadth of the canal is here seventeen hundred paces, so that there would be, after all, a distance of some six hundred still open, for here the water was so deep as to render it impossible to carry the mole across it. It was therefore decided that in this opening a number of vessels should be sunk ; while others, with their bows outward, were to be lashed together, and made fast to the ends of the mole, so as to close the passage with a kind of floating and armed bridge. A small squadron of the Royal fleet was to be stationed between the mole and the inner

¹ Clément Métezeau, a celebrated architect, born at Dreux in 1581. Jean Tiriot was a master-mason of Paris.

² Beaulieu Persac was captain of a ship-of-war, which had assisted in the defence of the île de Ré.

harbour, to prevent the vessels of the Rochellois from sallying out to burn the moored ships, while the main part of the fleet would cruise between the canal and the islands of Ré and Oléron to watch for the coming of the English.

The construction of the mole was begun forthwith, but it was a heart-breaking task, and it is probable that with anyone less inflexible than Richelieu to supervise it it would soon have been abandoned. For more than once the stormy sea destroyed in an hour the work of a week ; and, on one occasion, the result of three months' labour was entirely lost, through the fault of Louis de Marillac, who had caused the mole to be made upright, instead of slanting. But the patience of man eventually triumphed over the fury of the elements, and little by little the gigantic work advanced towards completion, despite the winds and the waves.

Bassompierre, although, for political reasons, he may, like most of the great nobles, have wished to spare the great stronghold of the Huguenot party, carried out the duties entrusted to him with his customary zeal and efficiency. Never probably had so much responsibility rested upon him. He had to see that the soldiers and labourers engaged upon the mole upon his side of the canal were promptly supplied with all they required, so that the work might not be interrupted even for an hour. He was responsible for the construction of all the forts and redoubts on the western and north-western side of La Rochelle, which appear to have been made from plans which he himself drew. He had constantly to be on the alert, by day and night, to repel the sallies which the garrison directed against the unfinished works, and to prevent the attempts which, until the lines of circumvallation had been completed, were constantly being made under cover of darkness to revictual the town.

One morning in January, 1628, the marshal received a visit from the Marquis de Grimault, who informed him

that he had been sent by the King, who had gone to spend a few days at a château near Nantes, to express to him his Majesty's displeasure to learn that he had been so negligent as to allow a large herd of cattle to be driven through his lines into the town. In great astonishment, Bassompierre inquired who had accused him of this, and was told that it was the Duc d'Angoulême, from whom the King had received a letter that morning. The marshal at once despatched one of his officers, named Lisle-Rouet, who was a noted huntsman and could be trusted to identify the track of any animal, to investigate the affair ; but Lisle-Rouet could find no sign of a herd of cattle having passed through their lines. He then proceeded to examine the country on the other side of La Rochelle, where the main part of the Royal army under Angoulême and Schomberg lay, and, by good fortune, came upon the track of the cattle near the village of Périgny, to the south-east of the town. He returned and reported his discovery to Bassompierre, who at once despatched him to the King, to whom, says the marshal, " he expressed just resentment that I had been blamed for the faults of others, and that without having heard me or had the matter confirmed, the King should have not only judged but condemned me on the mere statement of my enemy " ; and he offered to prove, if his Majesty would send someone who was a huntsman with him, that the cattle had entered the town through Angoulême's and Schomberg's lines.

Louis thereupon sent for the two commanders, before whom Lisle-Rouet repeated what he had told the King. They, of course, declared that the thing was impossible, upon which his Majesty suggested that they had better go and examine the ground over which the cattle were said to have passed themselves, and sent with them one of his gentlemen named Croysilles, who, like Lisle-Rouet, was an experienced huntsman. Croysilles confirmed the opinion of the other, and Angoulême and Schomberg were

reluctantly obliged to acknowledge that it was with themselves, and not with Bassompierre, that the blame for a particularly gross piece of negligence lay.

It seems probable, however, that the admission of the cattle into La Rochelle was due to something worse than negligence, at least so far as Angoulême was concerned. Anyway, he was most severely reprimanded both by the King and the Cardinal, the latter being furiously indignant that the success of operations involving so much labour and such enormous expense should be compromised in this fashion. As for Bassompierre, the King, "satisfied him by many words of his esteem and affection for his person"; but it must, nevertheless, have been very galling to the marshal to find how ready his Majesty was to credit the most unfounded accusations against even his most intimate friends.

It was this very same unfortunate trait in Louis XIII's character which was just then causing his great Minister the keenest anxiety. To assure his influence with the King it was necessary to be with him constantly, so as to be in a position to disabuse his gloomy and fickle mind of the suspicions which the enemies of the Cardinal were perpetually endeavouring to implant there. Well, Louis had grown weary of the monotony of the siege and had announced his intention of returning to Paris. The Cardinal was profoundly alarmed. To follow the King was to renounce La Rochelle, for no other than Richelieu was capable of finishing the work of Richelieu; to remain, to separate from the King, was to risk his political existence, for in Paris were his most dangerous enemies, who would not fail to take the fullest advantage of this opportunity his absence afforded them. How could he tell whether some malign influence might not succeed in undermining the inconstant monarch's trust in him, and bringing the whole fabric of his ambition, upon which alone it was reared, crashing to the ground? For a moment he had almost determined to go with the King;

but Père Joseph is said to have persuaded him to stay, pointing out that, if he went, the operations would almost certainly fail, and be followed by an outcry which would ruin him. Anyway, he decided to remain, and Louis, who appears to have recognised that his Minister's resolution had something magnanimous about it, took his departure for Paris on February 10 with the promise that he would soon return, and left him with the title of "Lieutenant-General of the Army," the marshals, Bassompierre and Schomberg, themselves being directed to take their orders from him.

"It was a singular spectacle," says Henri Martin, "this general in the red hat, with his staff in mitre and cowl. But the Cardinal knew how to render terrible what so nearly touched the grotesque. He had acted up to then in the shadow of the King ; he was henceforth general, admiral, engineer, munitioner, intendant, paymaster. He communicated the fire of his soul to all who surrounded him. The Bishop of Mende, who was directing under him the construction of the mole, died meanwhile, giving orders that his body was to be interred in La Rochelle. The spirit of the soldiery and of the lesser nobility, who did not share the mental reservations of the grandes, rose to the same pitch."

Meantime, however, storms were gathering on various parts of the horizon, and all the enemies of France appeared to be striving to prevent her achieving her political unity. Threatening preparations for the relief of La Rochelle were going forward in the English ports ; Wallenstein was carrying all before him in Germany, and the fainting princes of the North were sending despairing appeals for assistance ; while, worst of all, the Spaniards from the Milanese and the Duke of Savoy had invaded the duchy of Mantua and the marquisate of Montferrato, to which Charles of Gonzaga, Duc de Nevers, had succeeded on the death of Vincenzo I, Duke of Mantua, in 1627, and were threatening Casale, on the Po, a fortress which it

was of the most vital importance to France to save from falling into unfriendly hands.¹

But, until La Rochelle was taken, France could do little or nothing to aid her hard-pressed ally, for all the troops which could be spared from the defence of the frontiers, save those engaged to hold Rohan and the Huguenots of the South in check, were concentrated before the Protestant stronghold ; all the money which could be raised was being thrown into the mud of its canal. Recognising the impossibility of abandoning the siege, but sorely troubled by the news from Italy, Richelieu determined to make an attempt to take La Rochelle by surprise, although he was well aware that his chance of success was of the slightest. On March 11, accordingly, he sent for Bassompierre and informed him that that night he was sending Marillac to endeavour to blow up the Porte des Salines, and instructed the marshal to have 2,000 foot and 300 horse in readiness to support him. Bassompierre assembled his troops with all due secrecy at the place appointed, where he was joined by the Cardinal, with a force about equal to his own. They waited there all night, expecting every moment to hear the sound of the explosion ; but nothing happened, and it subsequently transpired that Marillac and the men who were carrying the petard had lost their way in the darkness.

In the early morning of the 13th another attempt was made, this time on the south-eastern side of the town ; but it failed completely, and more than forty men were killed and wounded.

After this second fiasco, Richelieu prudently abandoned the idea of taking La Rochelle by a *coup de main*,

¹ The Emperor Ferdinand, who naturally did not desire to see a prince so closely connected with France as Charles of Gonzaga in possession of Mantua and Montferrato, had confiscated both the duchy and the marquisate. The Duke of Guastalla, whose pretensions were supported by Spain, claimed Mantua ; while Charles Emmanuel had long coveted Montferrato, which, once in his hands, would bar the way from France into Italy. Casale, a very strong place, was the key to the whole difficulty, being then to Italy what Alessandria afterwards became.

and, feeling very uneasy as to what was happening in Paris, wrote to the King pressing him to hasten his return to the army, in order to discuss with him the situation.

The Cardinal did well to be uneasy at Louis's absence, for his enemies at the Court had been very busy indeed, more so, in fact, even than he appears to have imagined. This time the Queen-Mother was of the plot. Marie, as we have seen, had supported Richelieu warmly so long as she believed him to be her creature, prepared to place France at the mercy of her petty passions ; but gradually the unpalatable truth had begun to dawn upon her sluggish mind that the Cardinal had been using her favour merely as a stepping-stone to that of the King, and that it was upon the son, and not upon the mother, that he intended to lean. The discovery exasperated the Queen-Mother, and there were not wanting persons about her to sympathise with her complaints against the neglect and ingratititude of the Cardinal. Chief among these was Bérulle, recently elevated to the cardinalate, Michel de Marillac, the Keeper of the Seals, and other members of the High Catholic party. Loudly as these pious souls had fulminated against the stubborn heretics of La Rochelle in the past, they were now as little anxious for the fall of the town as were the great nobles, though for a different reason. They knew that with Richelieu religious considerations counted for very little in comparison with political, and foresaw that, once the Huguenot party was overthrown, he would make no attempt to interfere with that liberty of conscience which the *dévots* regarded with such indignation, and would make use of his victory, not to revoke the Edict of Nantes, but to thwart the designs of the House of Austria to crush the Protestant princes of Northern Europe.

Marie and her friends had recourse to all kinds of means to detain the King in Paris, but they did not succeed ; and on April 25 he rejoined the army, which he found larger by several thousand men than when he had

quitted it at the beginning of February, while all the works were approaching completion.

On the following day a herald was sent to summon La Rochelle to surrender in the name of the King ; but the inhabitants refused to receive him.

The most violent party had gained the day in this unhappy town, and the mayoralty had become a dictatorship. On March 3 the famous admiral of the Rochellois, Jean Guiton, had been elected mayor, against his will. " You know not what you are doing in nominating me," said he. " Remember that with me there must be no talk of surrender. If anyone says a word about that, I will kill him." And, drawing his poniard, he threw it on to the table of the Hôtel de Ville and gave orders that it should be left there.

The King and the Cardinal thought for a moment of converting the blockade into a regular siege with approaches in form, and endeavouring to take La Rochelle by assault. But the council of war which they called to discuss the matter objected that the only part of the fortifications which was approachable was of immense strength, and that to attempt to storm it would only entail a useless sacrifice of life. If Richelieu had been as sure of the officers as he was of the soldiers, he would perhaps have disregarded this advice, but he could not expose himself to the chance of a serious reverse. He therefore decided that there was nothing to be done but to continue the blockade and starve the place out. As for the Italian situation, it was recognised that it was impossible for France to intervene directly so long as La Rochelle remained untaken, but authority was given to raise a force of volunteers, who were to enter Italy by way of the Valtellina and throw themselves into Casale.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Arrival of the English fleet under the Earl of Denbigh—Its composition—Daring feat of an English pinnace—Retirement of the fleet—Probable explanation of this fiasco—Indignation of Charles I, who orders Denbigh to return to La Rochelle, but this is found to be impossible—The Rochellois approach Bassompierre with a request for a conference to arrange terms of surrender—The arrival of a letter from Charles I promising to send another fleet to their succour causes the negotiations to be broken off—La Rochelle in the grip of famine—Refusal of Louis XIII to allow the old men, women and children to pass through the Royal lines: their miserable fate—Movements in favour of surrender among the citizens suppressed by the Mayor Guiton—Terrible sufferings of La Rochelle—Bassompierre spares the life of a Huguenot soldier who had intended to kill him—Difficulties experienced by Charles I and Buckingham in fitting out a new expedition—Assassination of Buckingham—The vanguard of the English fleet, under the command of the Earl of Lindsey, appear off La Rochelle—Narrow escape of Richelieu and Bassompierre—The King takes up his quarters with Bassompierre at Laleu—Arrival of the rest of the English fleet—Feeble efforts of the English to force their way into the harbour—The Rochellois, reduced to the last extremity, sue for peace—Bassompierre conducts deputies from the town to Richelieu—Surrender of La Rochelle—Bassompierre returns with the King to Paris.

BASSOMPIERRE, who early in April had had an exceedingly narrow escape of his life, a cannon-shot from the town having killed three soldiers to whom he was speaking and covered him with earth, was busily employed during the days which followed the King's return to the army in erecting a formidable battery on the Chef de Baie, a promontory at the north-western extremity of the canal, opposite Coreilles, for the arrival of the English fleet was now daily expected.

To the profound mortification of Charles I, who considered the deliverance of La Rochelle a matter of personal honour, the difficulty of obtaining both money and men had delayed the fitting out of the expedition until the spring was well advanced; but at the end of April

it sailed from Portsmouth, under the command of the Earl of Denbigh, Buckingham's brother-in-law, and on May 11 appeared off the Île de Ré.

"On Thursday the 11th," writes Bassompierre, "M. de Mailsais (the new Archbishop of Bordeaux),¹ and several others, being come to dine with me, I brought them at noon to the battery of Chef de Baie, at which time the English fleet appeared off Baleines.² It was perceived by a sentinel who had been posted for that purpose in the belfry of Ars, in the Île de Ré, and Toiras, on being informed, sent in all haste to give the signal from the Fort de la Prée which he had arranged with me: three cannon-shots and a thick smoke. I caught sight of it also at the same moment, from the battery of the Chef de Baie, where I stood with the gentlemen of whom I have spoken, and ordered the signal to be given to warn our armies on sea and land, which was three cannon-shots from the said battery, and sent to warn the Cardinal (who had come to lodge on my side of the town, at a château called La Saussaye, half a league from La Fons). Then our naval armament, under the command of the Commandeur de Valençai, set sail, and advanced towards the promontory of Saint-Blanceau. At two o'clock in the afternoon, the advance-guard of the English appeared near Saint-Martin-de-Ré. The King was forthwith warned of it by the Cardinal, who came to Coreilles with him to witness the approach of the naval army of the enemy. The Cardinal went to lodge at Aytré, in order to look to matters on that side. The whole fleet, which was advancing in three lines, was composed of fifty-two vessels, to wit, four of the King's great ships-of-war, seven other vessels of five hundred tons burden, and forty-one little vessels of one hundred tons and less, both fire-ships and ships laden with provisions, so far as one could conjecture. But what made us quite confident that they would be unable to effect anything, and that our fleet would be incomparably stronger than theirs, was that

¹ Henri d'Escoubleau, at first, Bishop of Maillezais, in Poitou, and, afterwards, Archbishop of Bordeaux. He died in 1645. In 1648 the see of Maillezais was transferred to La Rochelle.

² At the north-east point of the Île de Ré.

neither the King's ships-of-war nor the other great vessels would find sufficient depth of water to enter the canal.

"About seven o'clock in the evening the English fleet approached to anchor at Chef de Baie. But, to prevent them, I ordered the battery to fire fifty cannon-shot upon the vessels of the advance-guard, of which three struck the hulls of the vessels and killed a few men, and the others pierced their sails. This caused them to stand out to sea towards the Straits of Antioche,¹ where they cast anchor."

The English appear to have imagined that they had only to show themselves to enter the harbour, as they had been informed that the French had only a few ships and that the mole was but little advanced. They were astonished to behold the approach barred by twenty-nine vessels and a swarm of boats and armed shallops. The flanks of this fleet were protected by the batteries which bristled on the two promontories of Chef de Baie and Coreilles and on both sides of the canal. Even supposing that they were able to force this formidable barrier, they would find themselves confronted by the mole, now almost completed, which was fortified by four batteries, one at each extremity, and one on either side of a narrow opening left for the passage of the tides. A little fort, built in the canal, covered this opening on the side of the sea, and this fort was covered, in its turn, by twenty-four vessels lashed together in the shape of a half-moon. On the other side of the mole, a second floating stockade of armed boats prevented the Rochellois from communicating with their allies.

It may be questioned, as Gardiner very justly observes, whether Drake or Nelson, followed by crews as high-spirited and as energetic as themselves, would have made an attack successfully. But Denbigh's fleet was for the most part manned by pressed men, carried off against their will from their ordinary occupations to a service of

¹ The passage between the islands of Ré and Oléron.

danger, in which the reward was but scanty pay, or, most probably, no pay at all. Many of them were soldiers converted into sailors from sheer necessity. Such men could have had but little stomach for the business in hand, nor was Denbigh the kind of commander to inspire those under him with a more daring spirit.

Denbigh would appear to have founded some hope on the superiority of his ships-of-war over any which the French could oppose to them ; but he was assured by the Rochellois *émigrés* who were with him that these great vessels would undoubtedly run aground in the shallow waters of the canal. He therefore decided to wait until the next spring tide made the attack easier for his fire-ships ; but, in any case, it would have been impossible for him to have attempted anything of importance for nearly a week, as during that time, Bassompierre tells us, the wind was blowing hard off the coast.

More than one attempt, however, was made by small vessels to run the blockade under cover of darkness ; and during the night of the 14th-15th, Bassompierre learned that an English pinnace had passed through the opening in the mole. He sent at once to warn the vessels which lay between the mole and the inner harbour ; but the pinnace succeeded in evading them and reached the town in safety. It was a most daring feat and worthy of the best traditions of the Navy.

On the 15th there was an alarm that the English fleet was getting under way, and Richelieu sent the Swiss Guards and Vaubecourt's regiment to reinforce Bassompierre at Chef de Baie. However, nothing happened.

On the following day the English sent a fire-ship against the French fleet, but the boats succeeded in towing it to the shore of the canal. It was thought probable that the enemy might attempt an attack that night, and the King came to spend it in Bassompierre's quarters, the marshal sleeping in his coach.

On the 18th Louis XIII dined and held his Council

at Bassompierre's quarters, and then went with him to Chef de Baie to watch the enemy's fleet in the Straits of Antioche. He then started to return to Aytré, accompanied by the marshal ; but, after they had proceeded some little distance, happening to glance back, they observed great activity aboard the English ships : anchors were being weighed, sailors were going aloft hoisting sails, and it was evident that a general movement was about to take place.

Bassompierre returned in all haste to Chef de Baie, and the French on land and sea began hurriedly preparing to meet the expected attack.

Presently, the great ships-of-war stood in towards the canal, until they had got within range, when they tacked, discharged their broadsides into the French vessels, and then stood out to sea, as did the whole fleet. The French watched them with astonishment, scarcely daring to believe that they really intended to leave the beleaguered city to its fate without any serious attempt to force their way into the harbour ; but they held on their course, running rapidly before the wind, and ere long the last of their sails disappeared below the horizon. "Then," says Bassompierre, "we returned to our quarters to make good cheer without fear of the enemy and with good hope of the speedy reduction of La Rochelle."

It is very difficult to decide who was to blame for this fiasco, for the evidence is exceedingly conflicting. The English officers, when they came home, threw all the blame on the Rochellois refugees who accompanied them, while the Rochellois bitterly retorted the accusation. The explanation given by Gardiner, who is always scrupulously fair in his criticism of naval and military operations, is as follows :—

"On the morning of the 8th [the 18th according to French chronology] a fresh apprehension seized on the commander [Denbigh]. The wind was blowing from Rochelle, and if he could not set fire to the ships of the

enemy, the French might possibly set fire to his. He therefore gave the order to weigh anchor, that the fleet might retire to a little distance. When the minds of men are in a state of despondency, the slightest retrograde movement is fatal. The Rochellois weighed anchor as they were told, but they understood the expedition had been abandoned and made all sail for England. Thus deserted, the whole fleet followed their example."

When the news that the expedition which he had only succeeded in sending out after so many difficulties and delays was on its way home, Charles I, who, only a day or two before, had sent orders to Denbigh to hold on at La Rochelle so long as possible and to send for reinforcements if he required them, was furiously indignant. He at once despatched Lord Fielding, Denbigh's son, to Portsmouth to press into the King's service every vessel he found there, and to direct his father to return at all hazards to La Rochelle and to await the reinforcements and supplies which would be sent him. But it was impossible for Denbigh to carry out these orders. His ships were full of sick men and very short of provisions, while some of them were urgently in need of repairs, and to send them to sea again before these were effected would, if bad weather came on, entail the loss of them and their crews. Besides this, three of his merchant-vessels laden with corn for La Rochelle had been snapped up by Dunkirk privateers within sight of the English coast, and they and their freights would have to be replaced. The King reluctantly acknowledged the force of Denbigh's representations and sent orders to him to refit, while all the available maritime force of the country was being got ready to accompany him.

The retreat of the English produced a profound impression both in France and abroad. The clergy, assembled at Fontenai, in Poitou, voted a subsidy of three millions to aid the King to finish his work. The Comte de Soissons, who had contemplated raising the standard of

revolt in Dauphiné and joining Rohan, sued for pardon and came to the Royal camp to make his peace with the King ; while the Duc de la Trémouille, the greatest noble of Poitou, hastened to abjure the Protestant faith, and was received into the Catholic Church by Richelieu, who promptly rewarded his "conversion" by the command of the light cavalry. It appears to have been the almost general belief that the surrender of La Rochelle was near at hand, a belief which was strengthened when, a week after the departure of the English fleet, the Rochellois made an unsuccessful attempt to send their "*bouches inutiles*" through the lines of the besiegers, thus admitting that the town was already beginning to feel the pinch of hunger.

But those who counted on the early surrender of La Rochelle understood but little the grim tenacity of that people, so well personified by the inflexible seaman whom it had chosen as its chief. The mayor Guiton, ably seconded by the old Duchesse de Rohan and the eloquent minister Salbert, exhorted their fellow-citizens to endure all things for the sake of their faith and to choose death rather than dishonour. Nevertheless, so great was the despondency which followed the departure of the English that these zealots were unable to prevent negotiations being opened with the Royal army, though it is probable that they had no intention of allowing them to be carried through. Anyway, on May 31, a drummer from the town came to Bassompierre's quarters ; informed him that the citizens were debating the question of surrender, and requested that he would send someone to arrange for a conference. Bassompierre despatched the Comte, afterwards the Maréchal, de Grancey to La Rochelle, and sent to inform the King and the Cardinal, who expressed their approval ; and on the following day commissioners were appointed on both sides. On the morrow, however, the negotiations were abruptly broken off by the Rochellois :

“ Friday, the 2nd [June].—The Rochellois received a letter from the King of England by which he promised them to hazard his three kingdoms for their salvation, and that in a few days he would send such a fleet as would render them effectual aid. This encouraged the zealots to make the people resolve to suffer the last extremities rather than surrender. They instructed Grancey to inform me of this and sent me a copy of the letter.”

Alas for the unhappy Rochellois ! Distracted by troubles at home and at his wits' end for money, many weeks were to pass before Charles was to be in a position to redeem his promise, and long before that time the last extremities had come upon the people whom he and his favourite had so wantonly incited to revolt.

During the ensuing weeks an occasional attempt was made to revictual La Rochelle on the land side, but without success, and by the end of June the town was in the grip of famine. Half the population was already subsisting on vegetables, roots, and shell-fish, but soon these resources failed, and they were obliged to have recourse to all the deplorable expedients which hunger can impose on the revolted senses. Soon there was not a cat or dog in the town, and when these had disappeared, parchments, skins and leather were cut into shreds, soaked in water, boiled, and eaten, with a little syrup to season the dish. Some endeavoured to support life on bran and chopped straw ; others declared war on rats and mice.

Several attempts were made to send the old men, women, and children out of the town ; but Louis XIII, who had none of his father's kindly heart, which had led him to have compassion on the fugitives at the time of the siege of Paris, gave orders for them to be driven back. Those who persisted in trying to pass through the Royal lines were taken and hanged. Guiton, more inflexible even than the King, ended by refusing to open the gates

to the poor creatures whom he had expelled, and numbers of them perished miserably between the besieging army and the walls of the town.

About the middle of July, a rising in favour of peace broke out amongst the least zealous inhabitants. It was, however, speedily put down by the fanatical party, and Guiton caused several of the leaders to be executed. Early in August, however, a more regular attempt was made in the council of the town itself. Several of the magistrates of the *Présidial* inclined to submission, and one of them declared that they ought to surrender, provided that the King would leave them their walls and their religious liberty, pointing out that if the English fleet had been unable to effect anything when the canal was only partially closed, it could not reasonably be expected to be more successful now that the mole was completed. Guiton did not make use of the poniard which still lay on the council-table against the speaker, but he struck him with his fist. Another councillor then struck the mayor, and this unseemly brawl terminated by the Council ordering the arrest of Guiton. The latter however, raised the people against the moderate party, and the two councillors who had offended him had to go into hiding to escape being torn to pieces by the mob, who had been persuaded that there was no mercy to hope for from the King, and that, if they opened their gates, the men would be massacred and the women abandoned to the soldiers.

Day after day, from the top of the ramparts, the famished citizens scanned the sea in the hope of catching sight of the approaching sails of the English fleet ; day after day their hopes mocked them. The deputies of La Rochelle in England addressed to Charles I the most touching remonstrances in the name of their perishing city, but the King could do nothing until the necessary subsidies for the equipment of another expedition had been voted by Parliament, and even when these had been

obtained, as the price of his surrender on the question of the Petition of Right, fresh obstacles arose to delay the departure of the fleet. And, meanwhile, the condition of La Rochelle was growing daily more terrible.

The markets were deserted, the shops closed, numbers of houses were unoccupied, every member of the families who had once occupied them having perished. Dead bodies were constantly found in the streets—the bodies of those who had wandered hither and thither in a vain search for food, and at last had lain down and died, too weak to crawl back to their homes. And there they often remained for days, since it was difficult for the authorities to procure men with enough strength left to carry them away and bury them.

Amid all the horrors of the famine there were numerous instances of heroic self-devotion. For a week a father kept his child alive by nourishing it with his own blood, and many preferred death to sharing what little food they could get with those whom they loved. The preachers went about amongst the people, exhorting them to faith in Heaven, and the old Duchesse de Rohan ably seconded their efforts. As for Guiton, he was as inflexible as ever ; nothing could bend that iron will. “ One of his friends,” writes Pontis, “ pointed out to him a person of their acquaintance who was dying of hunger. ‘ Are you astonished at that ? ’ he answered coldly. ‘ It is what you and I will assuredly have to come to ! ’ And when another observed to him that the whole town was famishing to death, he replied with the same coldness : ‘ If one man remains to close the gates, it is enough ! ’ ”

The garrison, for whom the scanty supplies of the town had been husbanded to the utmost, fared better than the citizens ; but by the middle of August it was found necessary to reduce their rations to what barely sufficed to enable even the strongest to carry out their duties. Many of the soldiers, who were not sustained by the same religious zeal as the Rochellois, attempted to

surrender to the enemy ; but, for the reasons which had caused the refugees to be driven back, orders were issued that their surrender was not to be accepted.

“ *On Monday the 14th [August],*” writes Bassompierre, “ fifty soldiers of the town came out towards Fort Sainte-Marie and asked to speak to me. They wished to surrender and to bring two hundred others with two captains ; but I refused them.”

And on the following day :—

“ A number of soldiers from La Rochelle came again to demand to be allowed to leave ; but it was in vain.”

A few days later a single soldier presented himself at Bassompierre’s quarters and asked to speak to him in private. The marshal granted his request, but took the precaution to have him searched first. It was well that he did so, for a loaded pistol was found under the man’s doublet. “ I sent him back,” says Bassompierre, “ being unwilling to do him any harm.” Which act of forbearance does him great credit, though it is open to question whether the poor, starving wretch would not have much preferred to be hanged.

The following night some of the garrison, rendered desperate by their sufferings, endeavoured to make their way through Bassompierre’s lines and killed one of his sentries. They were all shot down.

Although the money required for the expedition to La Rochelle had been obtained, the preparations for its departure were still far from complete, for the Navy was in a deplorable condition, the ships badly in need of repairs, the men without discipline, the officers without enthusiasm. Towards the middle of August, Charles I went down to Southwick, a country-house near Portsmouth, to supervise personally the fitting out of the fleet, leaving Buckingham, who was to take command of the expedition, in London to hasten the despatch of the supplies that were needed. No man in England believed

any more in the duke or his undertakings, and it was only with the utmost difficulty that he could get his officers to carry out his orders. "I find nothing," he wrote to Conway, "of more difficulty and uncertainty than the preparations for the service of Rochelle. Every man says he has all things ready, and yet all remain as it were at a stand."

On August 17 Buckingham went down to Portsmouth to consult the King concerning certain proposals to bring about peace between England and France which he had just received from the Venetian Ambassador, Contarini. Both he and Charles had now begun to realise their folly in engaging in a war with France while they had so many troubles at home, and while their hapless allies in Germany and Denmark, to whom they were powerless to render any effective aid, were justly imputing to them their misfortunes. They appear to have thought less of fighting, for they could not disguise from themselves that the difficulty of relieving La Rochelle must by this time be almost insuperable, than of obtaining for the Rochellois, by a great display of force, tolerable terms. Buckingham, however, was never again to see the shores of France, as on the morning of August 23 he was assassinated by Felton.

The duke's death did not alter the situation, but it, of course, delayed the departure of the fleet, and it was not until more than a fortnight later that it at last sailed, under the command of the Earl of Lindsey, who had succeeded to Buckingham's office of Lord High Admiral. It was an infinitely more powerful fleet than that which Denbigh had commanded, and consisted of some 120 vessels of various sizes, including fire-ships and vessels loaded with bombs to blow up the stockades.

In the afternoon of the 28th the sentinel in the belfry of Saint-Martin-de-Ré signalled to Bassompierre the approach of the English, and towards night the advance-guard cast anchor in a bay off the île de Loix.

On the following morning the English ships got under way and approached the canal, but the wind changed and they returned to their stations. The Cardinal, who had come to Chef de Baie, offered to take Bassompierre back to the marshal's quarters in his coach. On the way they both had a narrow escape, a cannon-shot from the town ploughing up the ground close to the coach and filling it with earth.

In the afternoon Louis XIII sent to inform Bassompierre that he proposed to do him the honour of taking up his quarters with him at Laleu, adding that he was to make what arrangements for his reception he thought fit and was to put himself to as little inconvenience as possible. His Majesty arrived, accompanied by his whole entourage, and more than twelve hundred gentlemen, to say nothing of his Household troops : Musketeers, Light Horse, Gensdarmes and Gardes du Corps, for all of whom Bassompierre had to find accommodation. However, he rose to the occasion and " received and entertained the company in such fashion that everyone marvelled." The King remained five weeks at Laleu, and as he was graciously pleased to regard himself as the guest of the marshal, the latter had, of course, to defray the expenses of his stay, which amounted to 800 crowns a day.

Another squadron of the English fleet arrived that evening, and two more, including sixteen powerful ships-of-war, on the following day. During the afternoon some of the King's ships stood in towards Chef de Baie and exchanged shots with Bassompierre's batteries, after which they all came to anchor in the Straits of Antioche.

On October 1 the remainder of the English fleet came in, but contrary winds prevented any forward movement during that and the following day. But towards morning on the 3rd the wind changed, and Bassompierre judged, from the boats passing continually to and fro between the vessels, that an attack was preparing. He was right, for,

so soon as morning broke, the English ships got under way and stood in towards the canal.

The marshal at once ordered the drums to beat to quarters and sent to warn the King and the Cardinal. They both hastened to Chef de Baie, where Louis announced his intention of remaining, while the Cardinal went to take up his station on the mole.

Favoured by wind and tide, the English fleet approached in three divisions. It was an imposing spectacle. The French fleet, under the orders of Valençay, filled the canal. The mole, which since the departure of Denbigh's expedition had been completed and strengthened by the erection of a double row of gigantic *chevaux de frise*, the two floating stockades, the forts, the cliffs, the banks of the canal, bristled with guns and soldiers. Thousands of volunteers from all parts of France had flocked to La Rochelle to take part in the long-expected combat and filled the ships and the boats. Standing on the mole, in the centre of the great scene, the Cardinal calmly contemplated the coming of the enemy ; while on the ramparts of the beleaguered town the famished citizens awaited in silence the issue of the battle which was to decide their fate.

Alas for the unhappy Rochellois ! The sufferings which they had endured with such heroic fortitude were all in vain. The officers and crews of Lindsey's fleet were no more ready to follow him into danger than those of Denbigh's had been to follow their commander in the spring. The masters of the armed merchantmen, which formed the advance-guard, complained that they were being deliberately sacrificed to save the King's ships, which had been ordered to follow in support. The King's ships drew too much water to come to close quarters, and the admiral could only order them to stand in as far as possible without running aground. They took good care that there should be no possibility of that.

The merchantmen approached just within range of

the French fleet and the batteries on the promontories, discharged a broadside, went about, discharged another broadside and then fell back, while the King's ships advanced and did the same. This performance was repeated three times, while the guns of the French fleet and of the batteries at Chef de Baie and Coreilles¹ blazed away at them. The noise was terrific, but the range was too long for much damage to be suffered by either side,² and, after the action—if such it can be called—had lasted a couple of hours, the tide turned, and the English ships returned to their anchorage. No attempt had been made to close with and board any of the French vessels, though Lindsey's despatches show that he believed that this operation was perfectly feasible.

At daybreak on the 4th the English renewed the attack, but with no more effect than on the previous day. In vain orders were sent to the captains to stand in closer to the French fleet and send in fire-ships against it. A few fire-ships were sent drifting in, but without any attempt to direct their course; and the French boats, braving the fire of the enemy's guns, advanced to meet them, towed them aside, and ran them ashore beneath the cliffs of Chef de Baie, where they could do no harm. Not a French ship was set on fire. Not a man on either side killed. A more futile affair could not be imagined.

After the English ships had returned to their anchorage, the Rochellois *émigrés* who were with them sent to demand a parley, and Bassompierre despatched Lisle-Rouet to bring two of them ashore, whom he took in his

¹ There were forty cannon in the batteries at Chef de Baie, "which made fine music and were very well served," and twenty-five at Coreilles.

² According to English reports, the whole fleet lost only six men on this occasion; but Bassompierre declares that it lost "nearly 200 men," and "that one of their best sea-captains, who was in a boat which was badly damaged by a shot from the French batteries, was amongst the slain." According to the marshal, the French had twenty-seven men killed, of whom four were killed at Coreilles by a shot from the Tour de Saint-Nicholas at La Rochelle. This incident caused great astonishment, as Coreilles had always been considered out of range of the cannon of the town.

coach to Richelieu's quarters. The deputies asked that they might be allowed to enter La Rochelle, in order to see for themselves the state which the town was in, and make a report to their friends ; but their request was refused. That night Bassompierre had the satisfaction of laying his hands on a famous spy from La Rochelle named Tavart, who had already been arrested twice before, but on each occasion had contrived to effect his escape, in consequence of which the Grand Provost, La Trousse, who had been responsible for his safe custody, had been disgraced. The marshal, however, took care that this bold fellow should not be allowed a third chance, and caused him to be hanged the next morning. He deserved a better fate.

On the 5th *Monsieur* returned to the army, accompanied by a suite of thirty gentlemen, and took up his quarters temporarily with Bassompierre, who was called upon to defray the expenses of the prince and his entourage. The siege of La Rochelle threatened to prove almost as costly an affair for the unfortunate marshal as his embassy to England.

In the course of the day it came on to blow hard and the English fleet had an unpleasant time of it. On the following morning, as the gale showed no sign of abating, they weighed, and retired to the safer anchorage of the île d'Aix. Despite the pitiable results of his attacks on the 3rd and 4th, Lindsey could not make up his mind to relinquish hope, and had decided to wait a few days, when the spring tide would enable him to bring his larger ships nearer to the mole. Time, however, pressed. A message reached the fleet that La Rochelle was now reduced to the last extremity and could hold out at furthest but a few days longer ; and as the prospect of being able to relieve the town was, at best, exceedingly dubious, it was decided to send Walter Montague, who had accompanied the expedition, to interview Richelieu, on the pretext of arranging for an exchange of prisoners.

Montague came to see the Cardinal on the 14th ; he returned on the following day, and again on the 16th, when Richelieu and Bassompierre took him to see the mole and the other defence works. "He expressed his astonishment at our work," says the marshal, "and declared to us that it was impossible to force the canal."

The Cardinal told the English envoy that the King could not tolerate the mediation of a foreign prince between him and his revolted subjects ; but a truce of a fortnight was granted, in order to allow Lindsey to communicate with his Government, with a view to bringing about peace between England and France, in which La Rochelle would be included. In the interval, however, the town surrendered.

On the 22nd the Huguenot refugees in the English fleet sent a request to Bassompierre for a safe-conduct, as they desired to see the Cardinal. This was granted, and on the following day six of them landed and were driven in the marshal's coach to the Cardinal's quarters at La Saussaye ; while Bassompierre himself went to the Fort of La Fons to meet the deputies from La Rochelle, who were also demanding to see Richelieu. At the Cardinal's request, he brought them to La Saussaye, where they were conducted into a gallery to await his Eminence's pleasure.

"Then the Cardinal, with whom were M. de Schomberg, M. de Bouthillier¹ and myself, ordered those who had come from the sea to be admitted and gave them audience. They told him in substance that they begged him to permit them to see those of La Rochelle, and that they felt sure that after they had spoken to them they would return to their duty. Those of La Rochelle were next admitted, and demanded permission to communicate with their fellow-citizens who were in the English fleet, and said that afterwards they would surrender the town into the King's hands, begging the Cardinal very humbly to secure for them tolerable conditions. Upon that the

¹ Claude Bouthillier, Seigneur de Pont-sur-Seine ; Secretary of State, 1628 ; *Surintendant des Finances*, 1642 ; died 1651.

Cardinal answered that, if they would promise not to speak to them, he would show them the deputies from the fleet. This they promised, and the Cardinal went into his gallery and told the deputies from the ship that, if they would assure him that they would not speak to the Rochellois, he would let them see them at once. This being agreed, he brought them into his chamber, where the Rochellois had remained with us. They saluted one another with an astonishment which it was amusing to see, after which he made them [the deputies from the fleet] return to the gallery. Then they [the deputies from La Rochelle] offered to return to their obedience to the King, and besought the Cardinal to procure his pardon for them. This he promised them, telling them that the King had gone on an excursion for a week, but that, when he returned, he would speak to him about it. Upon which one of the deputies cried : ' How, Monseigneur, a week ? There is not food in La Rochelle for three days ! ' Then the Cardinal spoke to them gravely, and pointed out to them the state to which they had reduced themselves, adding that, nevertheless, he would endeavour to incline the King to show them some mercy ; and forthwith he caused the articles of the capitulation to be drawn up for them to carry back to La Rochelle ; and they said that assuredly they would accept them. And so they went back again, and those from the ships likewise, who had permission to speak to their fellow-citizens, and they begged to be included in the amnesty with them. And to this the Cardinal consented, under the good pleasure of the King."

The capitulation, drawn up in the form of letters of pardon, was signed on the 28th. The refugees who were in the English fleet, or who had remained in England, received their pardon also, on condition that they returned to France within three months.

On the following day a deputation from the town came to make their submission to the King. The *maréchaux de camp*, Marillac and Le Hallier, met the deputies at the Porte Neuve of La Rochelle and conducted them to the entrance to the Royal lines, where Bassompierre was

awaiting them. The marshal then conducted them to Laleu and presented them to the Cardinal, who, in his turn, presented them to the King, "to whom, throwing themselves on their knees, they made very humble submission. The King then spoke a few words to them, and the Keeper of the Seals at greater length, and finally the King pardoned them."

On the 30th the town was occupied by the French and Swiss Guards. The sights they beheld were heart-rending. The houses, the streets, the squares were encumbered with dead bodies which the living had not had the strength to bury; and as the troops passed along they were assailed by a crowd of living spectres, who, ravenous with hunger, snatched at the ammunition-bread suspended from the soldiers' bandoliers. Nearly 15,000 people—that is to say, about half the population of La Rochelle—had perished; in all the town there were not 150 men capable of bearing arms.

The Cardinal made his entry the same day into the conquered town, preceded by a great convoy of provisions. Although ill and weak with fever, he had decided to make his entry on horseback, like a victorious general. Guiton, the man who had defied him for so many months, came, in his capacity as mayor, to receive him, escorted by six archers. The Cardinal sternly ordered him to dismiss his escort, as the office of Mayor of La Rochelle was henceforth abolished. Then he inquired of Guiton what he thought of the Kings of France and England. "I think," was the reply, "that it is better to have for master the King who has taken La Rochelle than the King who was unable to defend it."¹

On November 1 Richelieu, transformed from the general into the priest, celebrated Mass in the Church of Sainte-Marguerite, assisted by his faithful lieutenant,

¹ Guiton was banished for a time, when the Cardinal caused him to be recalled and made him captain of a ship-of-war.

Sourdis, Archbishop of Bordeaux. Then he went to take the keys of the town to Louis XIII, who made his entry late in the day, the Cardinal riding "all alone before the King, as though to show to all that he was the second person in France."

Some days later a royal declaration was issued, the preamble of which announced that the King had conquered by the aid of the Divine Providence, and by the "counsel, prudence, vigilance and toil" of the Cardinal. The mayoralty and all the other municipal offices of La Rochelle were abolished, the privileges of its citizens suppressed, and all its fortifications, save the three towers of La Lanterne, La Chaine and Saint-Nicholas and the ramparts facing the sea, were to be razed to the ground. The Pope was to be petitioned to make the town into a bishopric.

On the whole, however, it is impossible to deny that La Rochelle was treated with remarkable leniency. The town, it is true, lost its independence, which was, indeed, incompatible with the sovereignty of the King, but there was no vengeance taken, no victims sacrificed, no wanton mockery or insult offered to the vanquished. The lives and property of the inhabitants were spared, and their liberty of worship secured to them.

After the fall of La Rochelle, the Cardinal sent for Bassompierre and proposed to him that he should continue in command of the division of the army now serving under him, lead it to the Rhône, and there await orders to march into Italy to the relief of Casale. But the marshal begged his Eminence to excuse him, pointing out that though, in ordinary circumstances, he would be only too happy to have such a command, he had disbursed during the siege, largely in entertaining the King and other illustrious persons, no less a sum than 120,000 crowns, and that, in consequence, it was absolutely imperative that he should proceed to Paris, "for the

purpose of putting his affairs in order." The Cardinal accepted his excuses, and on November 18 Bassompierre set out with the King for Paris, into which Louis XIII made a triumphal entry, to celebrate his victory over the last great French town which was ever to stand up against the Monarchy, until in 1789 Paris rose and swept that ancient institution away.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

The Duc de Rohan and the Huguenots of the South continue their resistance—Opposition of Marie de' Medici and the High Catholic party to Richelieu's Italian policy—The Cardinal's memorial to Louis XIII—*Monsieur* appointed to the command of the army which is to enter Italy—The King, jealous of his brother, decides to command in person—Twelve thousand crowns for a dozen of cider—Combat of the Pass of Susa—Treaty signed with Charles Emmanuel of Savoy—Problem of the reception of the Genoese Ambassadors—Anger of Louis XIII at a jest of Bassompierre—Peace with England—Campaign against the Huguenots of Languedoc—Massacre of the garrison of Privas—“*La Paix de Grâce*”—Surrender of Montauban—Richelieu and d'Épernon—Bassompierre returns to Paris with the Cardinal—Their frigid reception by the Queen-Mother—Richelieu proposes to retire from affairs and the Court, but an accommodation is effected.

ALTHOUGH the great bulwark of Protestantism had fallen, Richelieu did not have his hands entirely free. The obstinate Rohan, by great exertions, prevented the Huguenot party from dissolving beneath this staggering blow ; and it was decided by a General Assembly which met at Nîmes not to submit unless their rights were preserved to them by a treaty guaranteed by the King of England. However, the continued resistance of the Huguenots of the South was not a matter of urgent importance, since the Royal troops already engaged there were well able to hold Rohan in check, until such time as the Cardinal was at leisure to undertake a vigorous offensive against him ; and he therefore decided to bend all his energies to the more pressing task of relieving Casale.

The duchy of Mantua had not been seriously attacked, the Spaniards and the Piedmontese having concentrated their efforts on the conquest of Montferrato. Charles Emmanuel had promptly seized upon his share of the

spoil ; but the governor of Milan, Don Gonzalez de Cordoba, had shown little skill and less energy in the conduct of his operations, and had been unable to prevent Casale, gallantly defended by the French volunteers, from being revictualled on several occasions. However, the town was now being closely besieged, and though the garrison, ably seconded by the citizens, could be trusted to offer a stubborn resistance, it was imperative that help should arrive with as little delay as possible.

Richelieu had, however, to gain a new victory at the Court before being able to go to the succour of the allies of France beyond the Alps. The Queen-Mother, who hated the Gonzaga family, and had an old grudge against the Duc de Nevers, now become Duke of Mantua, strenuously opposed the intervention of France in the affairs of Italy. Indifferent to the fact that neither the honour nor the interest of France would permit the sacrifice of such old allies as the Gonzagas, she urged that the King ought to permit the aggrandisement of the House of Savoy, the heir of which was the husband of his sister. The High Catholic party in the Council, indignant that Richelieu, instead of devoting himself to crushing the remnant of the Huguenots, proposed to make war on the King of Spain, supported her warmly ; and it is not improbable that their combined efforts might have been successful, had not the astute Cardinal had recourse to an expedient which he had already employed with success on more than one previous occasion.

First, he presented to the King a memorial, in which he outlined the policy, foreign and domestic, which he considered it essential that his Majesty should follow for his own glory and the welfare of his realm. Then, in his character of priest, he pointed out, with audacious frankness, the grave defects in his Majesty's character : his idleness, his inconstancy, his neglect of even his most faithful and devoted servants, and so forth, which it was most necessary he should endeavour to remedy if he



MARIE DE' MÉDICIS, QUEEN OF FRANCE.
From an old print.

desired to be a great king. And, finally, he tendered his resignation, on the pretext that his health was no longer equal to the cares of office.

Richelieu had little doubt what the answer would be. Louis, aware of his personal incapacity, and unwilling to renounce the power and glory which his great Minister had promised him, and which, as he well knew, he alone was capable of securing for him, accepted his advice and refused his resignation.

Marie de' Medici, finding herself unable to prevent the Italian expedition, demanded for *Monsieur* the command of the army, under the pretext of saving the King from the hardships and dangers of a winter campaign in the Alps. Richelieu did not see his way to oppose the Queen-Mother's request, and Louis consented; but his jealousy of his brother soon asserted itself, and, to the intense mortification of Marie and *Monsieur*, the arrangement was cancelled.

"After the King had given him [*Monsieur*] this command," writes Bassompierre, "he fancied that the glory which *Monsieur* his brother was going to acquire in this expedition would be detrimental to his own (so much power has jealousy amongst near relations), and his head, or more properly his heart, was so full of this idea that he could not rest. On the 3rd of January he came to Chaillot, where by chance I had come to see the Cardinal, who was then staying there, and, being closeted with him, began to tell him that he could not suffer his brother to go to command his army beyond the mountains. The Cardinal said that there was only one way of cancelling the appointment, which was for the King to go himself, and that, if he resolved upon this step, he must set out in a week at the furthest. To this he cordially assented and, at the same time, turned round and called me from the other end of the room. As I approached, he said: 'Here is a man who will go with me and serve me well.' I asked him where. 'Into Italy,' said he, 'where I am going in a week to make them raise the siege of Casale. Get ready to go and to serve me as my lieutenant-general,

under my brother, if he chooses to go.' Upon this the King returned to Paris and informed the Queen-Mother, and she informed *Monsieur*, who was not best pleased at the arrangement. Nevertheless, he affected to be so and got ready to depart."

On January 15, 1629, Louis XIII, having entrusted to Marie de' Medici the task of pursuing the negotiations for peace with England, left Paris for Grenoble, where the army with which he proposed to enter Italy was assembled.

"The evening before the King set out," says Bassompierre, "he asked me for some cider, as I had been in the habit of giving him some very good, which my friends sent me from Normandy, knowing that I liked it. I sent him a dozen bottles, and in the evening when I went to him for the password he said: 'Betstein, you have given me twelve bottles of cider, and now I give you 12,000 crowns. Go and find Effiat, who will give you the money.' 'Sire,' said I, 'I have the whole case at home, which, if it please you, I will let you have at the same price.' He, however, was satisfied with the dozen bottles, and I with his liberality."

This might seem an act of great munificence on the part of Louis XIII, did we not remember that the royal donor had been the guest of the recipient of his bounty for several weeks during the siege of La Rochelle, and had thereby put the latter to an expense which must have far exceeded the cost of the cider.

At Grenoble the King remained for some three weeks to negotiate with the Duke of Savoy. Charles Emmanuel was unable to believe that Louis really intended to cross the Alps while the Huguenots of the South were still unsubdued, and, esteeming himself the arbiter between France and Spain, he refused to abandon the Spaniards, unless the King would undertake to assist him to conquer the Milanese or Genoa or sacrifice to him Geneva.

The King and the Cardinal thereupon resolved to

descend into Piedmont by way of Mont-Genèvre and Susa. The Duc de Guise, Governor of Provence, was directed to create a diversion by way of Nice and Liguria, an operation which he executed very slowly and inefficiently. At Grenoble, however, the utmost activity prevailed, and though, when Richelieu arrived there, the army was deficient in artillery, munitions, transport and, in short, nearly everything required for a campaign, thanks to his unwearying exertions, in a surprisingly short time it was ready to take the field, and on February 22 the advance began. On March 1 the army passed Mont-Genèvre, notwithstanding the severity of the weather, and on the 3rd the advance-guard, some 10,000 to 12,000 strong, under Bassompierre and Créquy, encamped at Chaumont, the last village on the French side of the frontier, at the entrance to the Pass of Susa.

Two or three days were occupied in *pourparlers* between Richelieu, who had left the King at Oulx, and the Prince of Piedmont, who had hurried to Susa on receiving the news that the French had crossed the mountains. The Cardinal, however, recognised that the prince and his father sought only to gain time to enable them to fortify the Pass of Susa and to allow of the arrival of the Piedmontese and Spanish troops whom they had summoned in all haste. The negotiations were accordingly broken off, and at two o'clock in the morning of the 6th the King arrived from Oulx, accompanied by Longueville, Soissons, the Comte de Moret, Henri IV's son by Jacqueline de Beuil, and Schomberg, and the army crossed the frontier and advanced towards the head of the pass.

The Pass of Susa was a defile about a quarter of a league in length and in places less than twenty paces wide, obstructed here and there by fallen rocks. The enemy had not been idle and had erected three formidable barricades, strengthened by earthworks and ditches, while the rocky heights on either side were crowned with

soldiers and protected by small redoubts. On a neighbouring mountain stood a fort called by the French the Fort de Gelasse, from the name of a little watercourse hard by, and the cannon of this fort commanded the open space between Chaumont and the entrance to the pass. It was one of those positions which a handful of resolute men might successfully defend against an entire army ; and, as the Piedmontese had already between 3,000 and 4,000 men there, the probability of the invaders being able to force a passage through the defile, unless at a heavy sacrifice of life, seemed very slight.

The French troops before the pass consisted of seven companies of French Guards, six of the Swiss, the greater part of the Regiments of Navarre, the Baron d'Estissac and the Comte de Sault, and the Musketeers of the Guard. The Musketeers, who had dismounted from their horses, were under command of the Seigneur de Tréville, the erstwhile private soldier of the French Guards who, it will be remembered, had so distinguished himself at the siege of Montauban.¹ The Comte de Sault's regiment was detached from the main body, and, guided by peasants of the neighbourhood, sent to make a *détour* through the mountains, which would bring it to a spot overlooking the town of Susa, whence it could descend and take the enemy in the rear ; while the rest of the troops were drawn up just out of range of the guns of Fort de Gelasse.

At dawn the Sieur de Cominges was sent forward with a trumpeter to demand, in the name of the King, passage for his Majesty's person and army from the Duke of Savoy. To his request the Count of Verrua, who commanded the Piedmontese, replied that the French did not come as people who desired to pass as friends ; that he was fully prepared to resist them, and that if they endeavoured to force a passage, " they would gain nothing but blows."

¹ See page 311 *supra*.

The three marshals of France, Créquy, Bassompierre, and Schomberg, had come to an arrangement by which each in turn commanded the army for three days at a time ; and, when Cominges returned with this bellicose answer, Bassompierre, who happened to be in command that day, approached the King, who had taken up his position a little way behind the storm troops, and said to him : " Sire, Sire, the company is ready ; the musicians have come in to demand permission to begin the *fête* ; the masks are at the door. When it pleases your Majesty, we will dance the ballet." The King replied sharply that the marshal knew very well that they had only light guns with them, which would have no effect upon the barricades, and that they must wait until their heavy artillery came up.

" I said to him," continues Bassompierre : " ' It is too late now to think of that. Must we abandon the ballet because one of the masks does not happen to be ready ? Allow us to dance it, Sire, and all will go well.' ' Will you answer to me for it ? ' said he. ' It would be very rash for me to guarantee a thing so doubtful,' I replied, ' but I will answer to you that we shall perform it to the end with honour, or I shall be dead or a prisoner.' ' Yes,' said he, ' but if we fail, I shall reproach you.' ' You may call me anything if we fail,' I replied, ' except the Marquis d'Uxelles (for he had failed to pass at Saint-Pierre). But I shall take good care. Only allow us to do it, Sire.' ' Let us go, Sire,' said the Cardinal to him. ' From the demeanour of the marshal, I augur that all will be well. Be assured of it.' "

Somewhat reluctantly Louis XIII yielded, and Bassompierre forthwith gave the order for the troops to advance. He and Créquy dismounted and, sword in hand, led the French Guards and the regiments of Navarre and d'Estissac against the barricades. At the same time, with irresistible *élan*, the Musketeers, under Tréville, and the Swiss, under Valençay, escaladed the

heights on either side of the gorge, dislodged the enemy, gained the top of the rocks, poured a withering flanking-fire into the defenders of the barricades, and then charged down upon them. Finding themselves attacked simultaneously in front and on both flanks, the Piedmontese were seized with panic ; the three barricades were carried almost without resistance, and the enemy pursued almost to the gates of Susa, being badly cut up on the way by Sault's regiment, who fell upon them as they were retreating. The Duke of Savoy and the Prince of Piedmont were within an ace of being made prisoners, and only contrived to escape through the bravery of a Spanish officer, who, with a small body of men, threw himself between them and the Musketeers who were about to seize them and was wounded and taken.¹ The victory only cost the French some fifty men. Amongst the wounded were Valençay and Schomberg. The latter received a musket-shot in the abdomen, but the wound was not a dangerous one, and the marshal was soon convalescent.

As the pursuing French came within range of the cannon of the citadel of Susa, they were heavily fired upon. "But," says Bassompierre, "we were so excited by the combat and so joyous at having obtained the victory, that we paid no attention to these cannon-shots."

"I saw," he continues, "an incident which pleased me very much with the French nobles who were with the army ;² for we had M. de Longueville, M. de Moret, M. Aluin and the First Equerry³ and more than sixty others with us. A cannon-shot struck the ground close to our feet, covering us with earth. My long acquaintance with

¹ The Princess of Piedmont subsequently petitioned her brother for the release of this officer ; and Louis XIII gave Tréville, to whom he had surrendered, a valuable diamond by way of ransom for his prisoner.

² He means the nobles who served as volunteers.

³ Claude, afterwards Duc de Saint-Simon, father of the author of the famous *Mémoires*.

cannon-shots had taught me that so soon as the ball struck the earth there was no more danger ; so that I was at liberty to cast my eyes on the countenance of each of them in turn, to see what effect the shot had upon them. I did not perceive any sign of astonishment, nor even of surprise. Another shot killed one of M. de Créquy's gentlemen, who was amongst them, and they did not appear to take any notice of it."

In the course of the day the King sent to felicitate Bassompierre and Créquy on the victory they had won, but blamed them for having charged at the head of the troops, since, if they had been killed, not only would he have been deprived of the services of two of his most distinguished officers, but the army would have lost its leaders, and the effect on its morale might have been disastrous. The marshals replied that they had judged this to be an occasion when it was necessary to stake everything on a single cast, and to inspire their men to the utmost courage and resolution by placing themselves at their head, since if the first attack had been repulsed, it was most improbable that subsequent attempts would have succeeded.

The town of Susa surrendered the next day, and the King and the Cardinal established themselves there ; while Bassompierre and Créquy, pushing on with the advance-guard of the army, took Bussolongo and were about to attack Avigliana, a town situated only four leagues from Turin, when they received orders to halt, as negotiations for peace had begun.

On the 11th Charles Emmanuel sent the Prince of Piedmont to Susa, where he signed with the Cardinal a treaty whereby the Duke of Savoy engaged to revictual Casale and promised, in the name of the governor of the Milanese, to evacuate Montferrato and cease all hostile operations against the Duke of Mantua. The ratification of Philip IV was to be obtained within six weeks, and his Catholic Majesty was to undertake to secure for the Duke

of Mantua the Imperial investiture. In case of the contravention of this treaty by Spain, the Duke of Savoy was to join his forces to those of France. On March 18 the Spaniards raised the siege of Casale ; and thus at a single blow France triumphantly reasserted her position in Italy.

Richelieu subsequently proposed a defensive league between France, Venice, Savoy, and Mantua against the House of Austria. It was hoped to secure the adhesion of the Papacy, as Urban VIII had been much displeased by the invasion of Mantua and Montferrato.

Charles Emmanuel, eager to compensate himself on one side for what he had failed to gain on the other, pressed Louis XIII to invade the Milanese, and Venice warmly seconded his efforts. But, though the moment certainly appeared favourable for such an enterprise, Richelieu resisted the temptation and did not alter his plans. He was resolved to put an end to the civil strife in France before embarking on any further foreign enterprise.

The Duke of Savoy, irritated by this refusal, determined to violate the new treaty so soon as he could do so without danger. On one pretext or another, he delayed the evacuation of Montferrato by his troops, and the Spaniards followed his example. The King and the Cardinal, however, did not allow themselves to be tricked by the Duke ; they sent Toiras with between 3,000 and 4,000 men to relieve the Spanish garrisons of Montferrato, and Louis XIII announced his intention of remaining at Susa until the treaty was fully executed.

Towards the end of April the Republic of Genoa sent an Embassy Extraordinary to Louis XIII, and the momentous question arose as to whether the Genoese ambassadors were or were not to be permitted to present themselves covered before his Majesty. The privilege of the hat was accorded by the King of France to the representatives of all the princes and republics of Italy,

though until recent years those of Ferrara, Mantua, and Urbino had been excepted. But the later Valois kings had claimed sovereignty over Genoa, and this claim had never been formally renounced. Consequently, if Louis XIII were to allow the Genoese ambassadors to come into his presence covered, it would be tantamount to an admission that France had abandoned her pretensions in regard to the republic.

The King, much exercised in his mind over this matter, sent for Bassompierre and demanded his advice. The marshal replied that, as his Majesty now accorded the privilege of the hat to the ambassadors of Ferrara, Mantua, and Urbino, he ought certainly to accord it to the representatives of Genoa, a republic which yielded little or nothing in importance to Venice, and that, in point of fact, an ambassador whom Genoa had sent to his Court some years before had been covered during his audience. At that moment, the Secretary of State Châteauneuf, whom the King had also sent for, came in and Louis asked for his opinion. Châteauneuf took a different view of the matter from Bassompierre, and strongly advised the King not to admit the Genoese to his presence covered, declaring that they were his subjects and that, by this concession, he "would destroy the right which he had over this republic." Thereupon, Louis, always very tenacious of his prerogatives, declared that he should refuse to receive the ambassadors unless they were uncovered, and directed that they should be informed of his decision.

Next day Bassompierre received a visit from the Nuncio, Cardinal Bagni, who came to invoke his good offices on behalf of the Genoese ambassadors. The Nuncio told him that he had been charged by the Pope to take particular care that they were well received ; that it was against all equity and reason that they should be denied the privilege which had been accorded to the last ambassador whom the republic had sent to the King of

France ; that, at the Papal Court, Genoa, together with Venice, took precedence of all the princes of Italy ; and that he could assure the marshal that he would be performing an action very pleasing to the Holy Father if he were able to persuade the King to receive them covered.

Bassompierre replied that he should esteem it a great honour to render this trifling service to his Holiness and the Republic of Genoa, but that the King had already refused to follow his advice, and that his Majesty was very obstinate when he had once taken a thing into his head and easily irritated against those who opposed him. However, he would go and consult the Cardinal de Richelieu and see what could be done.

Richelieu, who was naturally very anxious to oblige the Pope, told Bassompierre that he would propose to the King that he should take the advice of the Council on the matter, and promised that he would warmly support the marshal's opinion and would arrange that the other members should do the same, with the exception of Châteauneuf, whom he would instruct to offer some half-hearted objections, for form's sake.

The Council met, but the King, who had been informed that the Genoese ambassadors had decided to return whence they came without demanding audience of him, if they were to be refused the right of being covered, was in a particularly obstinate mood, and after demanding Bassompierre's advice, he added : " I ask you for it, but I shall not follow it, for I know beforehand that it will be in favour of their being covered, and that what you are doing is on the recommendation of Don Augustine Fiesco, who is staying with you." Don Augustino Fiesco, it should be mentioned, was a Genoese noble and an old friend of Bassompierre. Bassompierre, indignant at such an insinuation, protested that he had no relations with the Republic of Genoa and was under no obligations to Don Augustine Fiesco, who, in point of fact, was under considerable obligations to him ; and that, even if such had

been the case, it would not prevent him from discharging his duty to his sovereign.

“ ‘ Finally, Sire,’ said I, ‘ the oath which I have taken at your Council obliges me to give you my advice in accordance with my judgment and my conscience ; but, since you hold so bad an opinion of my integrity, I will abstain, if it please you, from giving my advice.’

“ ‘ And I,’ said the King, in a violent passion, ‘ I will force you to give it me, since you are one of my Counsellors and draw the salary of a Counsellor.’

“ The Cardinal, who sat above me, said to me : ‘ Give it, in God’s name, and do not argue any longer.’ Upon which I said to the King :—

“ ‘ Sire, since you absolutely insist on my giving my opinion, it is that your rights and those of your crown would be utterly destroyed if, by this act, you renounce the sovereignty you claim over the Genoese, and that you ought to receive them bareheaded as your subjects, and not covered as republicans.’

“ Then the King rose up in great anger and told me that I was laughing at him, and that he would teach me that he was my king and my master ; and other things of the same kind. As for me, I did not open my mouth to utter a single word. The Cardinal pacified him and persuaded him to follow the general opinion, which was that the Genoese ambassadors should be covered at the audience. In the evening we went to the King’s concert ; he did not say a word to the others, from fear of speaking to me, and did nothing but find fault.”

A day or two afterwards the King had repented of this childish display of temper, and, by way of making his peace with Bassompierre, sent him nine boxes of Italian sweetmeats.

On April 4 peace with England was signed at Paris. Charles I had vainly endeavoured in the negotiations which preceded it to exercise in favour of Rohan and the Huguenots the intervention which Richelieu had refused to permit at La Rochelle. But the French Government

was inexorable, and he was constrained to abandon the Protestants, notwithstanding their complaints and imprecations.

On the side of Italy matters were less satisfactory. The defensive league against Spain which Richelieu had planned did not materialise; while Philip IV's ratification of the treaty for the evacuation of Mantua and Montferrato did not arrive; and it was evident that he and Charles Emmanuel intended to evade its stipulations. The King and Richelieu therefore determined to crush the Huguenot rebellion by a single vigorous blow, and then to resume, if need be, the offensive in Italy. On April 28 the King left Susa to return to France; and on May 11 the Cardinal followed, accompanied by Bassompierre, leaving Créquy at Susa with 6,000 men. The Duke of Savoy was warned that the French would remain in occupation until the treaty had been formally ratified by Philip IV.

The bulk of the Royal army had already crossed the Rhône, and 50,000 men were overrunning Languedoc and Upper Guienne. Richelieu's plan of campaign was to send four corps to lay waste the country around Montauban, Castries, Nîmes and Uzès, the principal towns which the Protestants still held, so as to render these places incapable of sustaining a siege, while the King in person, with the rest of the army, was to march from the Rhône to the Tarn across the Cévennes, reducing on their way the smaller Huguenot strongholds in that part of the country.

To this powerful combined attack Rohan was only able to oppose forces weakened by a war which had already lasted eighteen months and disheartened by the news that England had abandoned them. Not knowing where else to turn for assistance, the successor of Coligny applied to the successor of Philip II, and on May 3, 1629, a treaty was signed at Madrid by which Spain promised the Huguenots a yearly subsidy of 300,000 ducats, and Rohan undertook "to continue the war so long as it

might please his Catholic Majesty." The duke further undertook, in the event of his being successful in establishing a Protestant republic in the South of France, to permit liberty of worship to all Catholics within its boundaries. "This strange compact, however, came too late ; probably, before the first instalment of the subsidy had reached Rohan's hands, his dreams of a Huguenot republic had been rudely dissipated."

On May 19 the Cardinal and Bassompierre rejoined Louis XIII in the Royal camp before Privas, the capital of the Protestant Vivarais. On their arrival the King proposed to hold a meeting of the Council, but as the Duc de Montmorency, who was with the army, claimed to take precedence of the marshals of France, and Bassompierre declared that he refused to suffer him to do so, his Majesty was obliged to postpone it until the dispute between these great personages could be adjudicated upon.

Privas was garrisoned by 500 picked soldiers, commanded by a brave Huguenot noble, the Marquis de Saint-André de Montbrun, supported by a regiment of the Vivarais militia and a population animated by fierce religious zeal. The resistance at first was very stubborn, but by May 27 the outworks had been captured, and during the following night the garrison and the majority of the inhabitants evacuated the town and retired into the Fort de Toulon, situated on a hill to the south-east of Privas. The rest of the townsfolk endeavoured to escape into the woods and mountains, but most of them were either killed or captured. The prisoners were hanged or sent to the galleys. While the greater part of the Royal army was engaged in the congenial task of pillaging the town, which they afterwards set on fire, Bassompierre, with 1,200 Swiss, invested the fort, and at midday the garrison offered to capitulate. Louis XIII, however, was greatly incensed against the people of Privas, who had treated the Catholics of the surrounding country with much cruelty, and he insisted that they should surrender

at discretion.¹ This they refused to do, but, a little later, Saint-André came out alone and surrendered at discretion to Bassompierre.² At the request of the King, Saint-André then wrote to those in the fort urging them to follow his example; but, fearful of the fate which awaited them, they could not bring themselves to do so. Towards evening a terrific storm came on and continued most of the night, and had the Huguenots endeavoured to effect their escape under cover of it, they would probably have succeeded. Unhappily for themselves, they made no attempt.

“ On Tuesday, the 29th, our soldiers who had invested the Fort of Toulon cried out to the besieged that Saint-André had been hanged, which threw them into despair. The King sent me to show him to them, and they were content to surrender at discretion. But, at the same time, our soldiers, without orders, came from all parts to the assault, and took the fort, killing all whom they encountered. Some fifty of those who were made prisoners were hanged and two hundred others were sent to the galleys. The fort was also set on fire. Some two hundred escaped, but were met by the Swiss who were escorting the cannon to Vivas, by whom some of them were killed.”³

¹ The intentions of his Majesty, at least so far as the garrison of Privas was concerned, may be gathered from a letter which he wrote the same day to the Queen-Mother. “ They are the best men whom M. de Rohan has, and, in causing them to be hanged, *as I shall do*, and Saint André the first, I shall cut off M. de Rohan’s right arm.”

² His followers had apparently obliged Saint-André to surrender himself.

³ Such is the account given of this lamentable affair by Bassompierre, but, according to other contemporary relations, there would appear to have been some excuse for the barbarous conduct of the Royal troops. “ Those who had remained in the fort,” writes Louis XIII to the Comte de Noailles, “ seeing that they were unable to escape the evil which pressed them, likewise surrendered to my discretion; but, since it was God’s will to destroy them and avenge upon themselves their rebellion and disobedience, He permitted that some among them, inured more and more to evil, deliberately set fire to a great sack containing a quantity of cannon-powder, which blew up him who had set alight to it and some others, both of these wretches and

The Protestants of the Vivarais, terrified by the fate of Privas, laid down their arms. Alais offered some resistance, but Rohan's attempt to throw reinforcements into the town failed, and, after a siege of a week, it capitulated. Rohan felt that his cause was lost, and endeavoured to negotiate a peace for the whole party. But, though Richelieu authorised the convocation of a General Assembly at Anduze, it was only to impose his conditions. He refused to treat with the Protestants as though they were a hostile state, as had hitherto been the custom. Peace—*la Paix de Grâce*, as it was called—was concluded at Alais on June 29. A general amnesty was granted, and the Edict of Nantes re-established; but the fortifications of all the towns which had risen in rebellion were to be razed to the ground.

The King and the Cardinal visited Nîmes, Uzès and Montpellier, where they were well received; but Montauban refused to accept the peace, except on condition of preserving its fortifications. Richelieu despatched the Sieur de Guron, a gentleman with a very persuasive tongue, to try and induce the inhabitants to reconsider their determination, and Bassompierre, with the greater part of the Royal army, after him, with orders to resort to force and lay siege to the town should persuasion fail.

The marshal arrived before Montauban on August 10, and, learning that Guron's eloquence had so far been without effect, began to make preparations to invest the

soldiers of the Guards, French and Swiss, whom I had ordered thither to secure this fort and prevent any disorder. My Guards, excited by this evil action, and believing that a mine had been fired against them, were transported with fury, and, contrary to my intention and my orders, killed the greater part of those who had thrown themselves into the said fort."

But if there were extenuating circumstances in the case of the soldiers, there was certainly no excuse for Louis XIII following up the massacre by the execution of a number of the survivors. He even wanted to hang the brave Saint-André, and would have done so, but for the intervention of Richelieu. There was between the King and the Cardinal this great difference—that the latter was rigorous only when his interests or policy demanded it, whereas the former was cruel by nature.

place. But, on the following morning, Guron came to inform him that, as the result of a great oration which he had delivered before the council of the town the previous day, it had been decided to ratify the peace.

A few days later all was satisfactorily arranged ; and on the 20th the Cardinal—for Louis XIII was now on his way back to Paris—made a triumphal entry into Montauban, escorted by 600 gentlemen, with Bassompierre riding before him, as he would have done before the King.

And so long as he was able to retain the uncertain favour of Louis XIII, Richelieu was king, in all but the name, and the greatest nobles in France trembled at his frown. A singular illustration of this is the way in which the once haughty and all-powerful d'Épernon was obliged to humble himself before him.

"M. d'Épernon," says Bassompierre, "who had arrived at Montech,¹ sent the Comte de Maillé² to me to request me to ask the Cardinal at what place he might meet him on the road to pay his respects to him, having heard that he was leaving on the morrow to return to the Court. He explained that, for a man of his age, the journey which he had performed that day was fatiguing, so that it had prevented him coming so far as Montauban, besides which it would have been difficult to find suitable accommodation there for himself and his suite. I executed this embassy to the Cardinal, who took it extremely ill and imagined that M. d'Épernon refused to humble his pride to the point of coming to visit him in his government of Guienne, in which the King had given the Cardinal absolute power. He was exceedingly angry, and told me to send him word that he declined to see him in the country or outside Guienne, and that, although it had been his intention to travel by way of Auvergne, he would travel by Bordeaux, for the express purpose of making himself recognised and obeyed in accordance with the

¹ Now the chief town of the arrondissement of Castel-Sarrasin, in the Department of Tarn-et-Garonne.

² Donatien de Maillé, Marquis de Kerman, Comte de Maillé. He was killed in a duel in 1652.

power which had been conferred upon him, and that he would put matters on such a footing that the authority which M. d'Épernon exercised there would be curtailed. I softened these expressions in the answer I made to the Comte de Maillé, and wrote to M. d'Épernon begging him to come to Montauban, to avoid drawing upon himself the enmity of this all-powerful man. The Comte de Maillé took his departure, and in three hours' time returned with an answer to the effect that M. d'Épernon would come to Montauban on the morrow to pay his respects to the Cardinal, since he had been assured that the Cardinal was not leaving until after dinner. . . . I went that evening to acquaint the Cardinal with M. d'Épernon's approaching arrival, which appeased his anger, and he consented that I should go to meet him and that the infantry should be under arms when he arrived."

Bassompierre, from the above, would appear to have formed a pretty correct idea of the danger of offending the great Minister ; he lived to know its full extent.

On August 22, Richelieu, accompanied by Bassompierre, left Montauban, to the sound of mine and sap, which were destroying the redoubtable fortifications of the last stronghold of French Protestantism, and travelled by easy stages towards Fontainebleau, the Cardinal being received in every town through which he passed with the highest honours ; in fact, his journey resembled a royal progress. At Nemours, where he arrived on September 12, nearly all the most important personages of the Court were awaiting him, and escorted him in triumph to Fontainebleau.

Here, however, his Eminence received an abrupt check, for when he went to pay his respects to Marie de' Medici, with whom were Anne of Austria and the Princesses of the Blood, the Queen-Mother, whom the Cardinal's triumphs had only served to incense still more bitterly against him, received him with studied coldness and refused to say so much as a word to either Bassompierre or Schomberg, whom she now apparently regarded

as Richelieu's creatures ; though she spoke to Louis de Marillac, upon whom the marshal's bâton had recently been conferred. The King, however, came in immediately afterwards and welcomed the Cardinal most warmly. He then drew him into his mother's cabinet, where Richelieu immediately requested permission to retire from office and from the Court, on the ground that his presence was distasteful to the Queen-Mother, and that he did not wish to be the cause of friction between her and the King. The King told him that he would reconcile them, and returning to Marie's chamber, spoke most graciously to Bassompierre, evidently with the intention of atoning for her Majesty's rudeness to the marshal, of which Richelieu had, of course, informed him

" On Friday, the 14th, the quarrel continued, and the Cardinal sent for Madame de Combalet,¹ La Meilleraye² and other persons belonging to the Queen-Mother's Household who were his creatures, and told them that they must prepare to retire from her service, as it was his intention to retire from affairs and from the Court. However, that evening there were so many comings and goings, and the King testified so earnest a desire for an accommodation, that it was effected on the Saturday, to the universal satisfaction of the whole Court."

¹ Richelieu's niece, Madame de Combalet, afterwards Duchesse d'Aiguillon, was *dame d'atours* (mistress of the robes) to Marie de' Medici.

² Charles de la Porte, afterwards Duc and Maréchal de la Meilleraye, was Captain of the Queen-Mother's guards.

CHAPTER XXXIX

Serious situation of affairs in Italy—Trouble with *Monsieur*—Richelieu entrusted with the command of the Army in Italy—It is decided to send Bassompierre on a special embassy to Switzerland—The marshal buys the Château of Chaillot—His departure for Switzerland—Mazarin at Lyons—Bassompierre's reception at Fribourg—He arrives at Soleure and convenes a meeting of the Diet—His discomfiture of the Chancellor of Alsace—Success of his mission—He receives orders from Richelieu to mobilise 6,000 Swiss—The Cardinal as generalissimo—Pinerolo surrenders—Bassompierre joins the King at Lyons—Louis XIII and Mlle. de Hautefort—Successful campaign of Bassompierre in Savoy—His mortification at having to resign his command to the Maréchal de Châtillon—Increasing rancour of the Queen-Mother against Richelieu—Visit of Bassompierre to Paris—An unfortunate coincidence—Louis XIII falls dangerously ill at Lyons—Intrigues around his sick-bed—Perilous situation of Richelieu—Recovery of the King—Arrival of Bassompierre at Lyons—Suspicions of Richelieu concerning the marshal—The latter endeavours to disarm them—Question of Bassompierre's connection with the anti-Richelieu cabal considered—His secret marriage to the Princesse de Conti.

MEANTIME, the enemies of France had not been idle. Seeing Richelieu engaged in what he imagined would prove a long war in Languedoc, the Emperor, in concert with Spain, resolved to take steps to recover his shaken influence in Italy. Towards the end of May, 1629, German troops entered the Grisons and seized the passages of the Rhine and the town of Coire; while Ferdinand called upon Louis XIII to evacuate the "Imperial fiefs of Italy." The Swiss, a prey to religious dissensions, made no effort to expel the foreigner from the Grisons; but the Imperialists did not advance until the autumn, the interval being spent in negotiations. However, at the end of September they descended into Lombardy and invaded Mantua, under the orders of the Italian general Colalto; while Spinola, who had been sent with a Spanish force from the Netherlands to secure the

triumph of the Catholic powers in Italy and had replaced the feeble Don Gonzalez de Cordoba as Governor of the Milanese, occupied Montferrato and threatened Casale.

It was clear that France must intervene at once, if the fruits of the expedition to Susa were not to be lost, and it was decided to send a powerful army into Italy. Louis XIII would have gone in person, but his health was unequal to the trials of another winter campaign, besides which there was trouble with *Monsieur*, who, in the previous September, as the result of differences with the King over the latter's refusal to permit his marriage with Marie de Gonzaga, daughter of the Duke of Mantua, had retired into Lorraine and had not yet been persuaded to return; while there was also a possibility that the Imperialists might invade Champagne or the Three Bishoprics.

The King accordingly decided to entrust the command to Richelieu, with Créquy and Bassompierre as his lieutenant-generals.

“But,” says the latter, “M. de Schomberg, who aspired to my charge, caused pressing instances to be made by the ambassadors of Venice and Mantua to send me into Switzerland, for three purposes: the first, to ascertain what means there might be to liberate the Grisons and drive out the Imperial army; the second, to prevent the Imperialists in Italy being reinforced by troops from Switzerland; and the third, to raise powerful levies, if there were need of them. So that the Cardinal told me one morning that it was necessary for me to make a journey into Switzerland, which would not last long, and that my place and my charge would, notwithstanding, be preserved in the Army of Italy. I accepted this commission, since the King desired to charge me with it, and began preparations for my journey, as did the Cardinal likewise for his journey to Italy.”

Before his departure Richelieu gave “a superb *fête* to the King and the Queens, with comedies, ballets, and

excellent music." Then, on December 29, he set out for Lyons, with the proud title of " Lieutenant-General, representing the person of the King in his army within and without the realm."

Bassompierre began the year 1630 by purchasing from the widow of Président Jeannin her château at Chaillot, upon the enlargement and decoration of which he, during the next few months, expended very large sums, and converted it into one of the most sumptuous country-residences in the neighbourhood of Paris. Unhappily for him, it was to prove a case of sowing for others to reap. On January 16, " after having placed his affairs in some degree of order," he set out for Switzerland, and on the 21st arrived at Lyons, where he was to receive his final instructions from the Cardinal. At Lyons he remained for some days and would appear to have passed the time very pleasantly, as " M. de Montmorency and I gave a ball on alternate evenings to the ladies of Lyons." On January 28 he notes that " the sieur Julio Massareny [Giulio Mazzarini] came to Lyons on behalf of the Nuncio Pensirole [Pancirolo], whom the Pope had sent to treat for peace." It was on the occasion of these negotiations that the name of Mazarin makes its first appearance in French history ; and, though they were without result, for Richelieu was not to be diverted from his aim, the high opinion which the Cardinal then conceived of the abilities of the young Italian diplomat was the beginning of the latter's fortune.

On January 30 Bassompierre left Lyons and resumed his journey to Switzerland. On February 8 he arrived at Fribourg, where he was received with great honour, cannon firing salutes and 2,000 armed burghers lining the streets. After entertaining the municipal authorities to a sumptuous banquet, he proceeded to Berne, to be received with similar distinction. On the following day he attended a meeting of the Council and harangued them.

" Afterwards they came to dine with him and remained all day at table."

On the 12th he arrived at Soleure, into which he made a "superb entry." From Soleure he sent letters to all the Cantons convening a Diet for March 4, and during the interval he and Brulart de Léon, the permanent French Ambassador in Switzerland, had several conferences with regard to the Grisons and endeavoured to persuade the Canton of Zurich to send them reinforcements. The Zurich people, however, did not wish to commit themselves to open war with the Empire, though they promised to assist the Grisons secretly with munitions.

The deputies began to arrive on March 2, and the representatives of each canton came in turn to pay their respects to Bassompierre; while on the 4th, when the session opened, the whole Diet, preceded by its mace-bearers, came in solemn procession to salute him.

That day Bassompierre learned that "the Chancellor of Alsace, Ambassador of the whole House of Austria, had arrived at Soleure, without sending to him to announce his coming or visiting him, contrary to the recognised custom of ambassadors." The marshal, highly indignant at this breach of diplomatic amenities, at once resolved to induce the Diet to refuse the Chancellor—who had, of course, come to Soleure in the hope of putting a spoke in Bassompierre's wheel—a hearing.

" M. de Léon tried every means he could to dissuade me, telling me that I should not succeed, and that we should have to bear the mortification of failure. Nevertheless, trusting to my great influence in Switzerland, and to my industry in treating with these people, I persisted in my design and set to work."

The marshal recounts at considerable length the various expedients to which he had recourse, and the springs he set in motion, for the purpose of avenging his

outraged dignity. It will, however, suffice to say that he succeeded, and that, after long deliberations, the Diet refused to grant an audience to the Chancellor, "who returned very dissatisfied, declaring that the Swiss would be objects of indignation to the whole House of Austria."

By dint of persuasive speeches and lavish hospitality, Bassompierre experienced no difficulty in inducing the Diet to accord him permission to raise whatever troops he might require for the service of France, and on the 11th he was able to write to the Cardinal that his mission had been entirely successful. Then he took to his bed and sent for a surgeon to bleed him, as "he found himself somewhat unwell, on account of the debauches in which he had indulged during the Diet."

During the next fortnight Bassompierre was occupied in arranging for the levy which the Diet had authorised, so that the troops might be ready to take the field so soon as they were required. On March 27 a courier arrived from the Cardinal with the news that the armistice between France and Savoy was at an end, and that Richelieu had entered Piedmont and was going to lay siege to Pinerolo. The Cardinal ordered Bassompierre to mobilise 6,000 Swiss immediately, and informed him that he had written requesting the King to send him other troops and a patent as general for the conquest of Savoy.

Richelieu had moved his army through Savoy, crossed the Alps and advanced to the frontier of Montferrato, when he learned, through intercepted letters, that Charles Emmanuel was playing him false. He at once turned about, called upon the Duke to fulfil his engagements, and, the answer he received being unsatisfactory, marched against him. The weather was frightful, and the soldiers, chilled to the bone by the icy blast as they stumbled through the snow, "consigned to all the devils the cardinal-generalissimo," who rode at their head mounted

on a splendid charger, wearing a cuirass of blue steel, a hat with a nodding plume on his head, a sword by his side, and pistols at his saddle-bow. But they pushed on and presently reached Rivoli, which the Duke of Savoy had hastily evacuated, where they found warmth and shelter and an abundance of good wine, in which, forgetting their recent hardships, they drank to the health of the "great cardinal."

Charles Emmanuel had fallen back to Turin, and flattered himself that, with the aid of Spinola and Colalto, he would be able to give battle to the French on advantageous terms beneath the walls of his capital. But Richelieu, instead of advancing on Turin, turned back towards the Alps and on March 20 invested Pinerolo, which Henri III had so imprudently restored to Savoy at the beginning of his reign. The town surrendered on the 23rd, and the citadel a week later, and France thus secured an invaluable base for future operations. The first attack on the citadel cost the life of Bassompierre's old companion-in-arms Cominges-Guitaut, a very brave man and most capable officer, who was sincerely regretted by the marshal.

Bassompierre remained at Soleure until April 20, when he left for Geneva, where the troops which he had raised were to assemble. On May 4 he received a despatch from Louis XIII, informing him that he intended to make the conquest of Savoy in person and directing him to join him at Lyons to receive his orders. He was to send the Swiss to Grenoble, whither the King intended to proceed so soon as possible.

Louis XIII had left Fontainebleau towards the end of February, and had remained for some weeks at Troyes, as it was thought not improbable that the Imperialists, who were in strong force in Alsace and on the borders of Lorraine, might attempt an invasion of Champagne. Here, on April 18, he was joined by his brother, whom he had not seen since Gaston had taken himself off to

Lorraine in the previous autumn.¹ The King received him very cordially, and, on the advice of Richelieu, appointed him " Lieutenant-General representing the King's person in the Army of Champagne, as well as in Paris and in the northern provinces." It was hoped in this way to satisfy the *amour-propre* of this troublesome prince, who was perpetually complaining that he was excluded from that share in public affairs to which his rank entitled him, and to make it to his interest to conduct himself well in future. The real commander of the army of Champagne was, however, the Maréchal de Marillac.

The King, accompanied by the two Queens and the whole Court, then proceeded through Burgundy to Lyons, where on May 6 Bassompierre joined him, and was not a little astonished to find his Majesty amongst the ladies, " gallant and amorous, which was contrary to his custom." The explanation is that Louis had recently fallen in love with Mlle. de Hautefort, one of the Queen's maids-of-honour. This affection was of a very innocent kind, but it was skilfully exploited by the enemies of Richelieu, and, in time to come, was to occasion the Cardinal considerable embarrassment.

On the 8th the King left for Grenoble to confer with the Cardinal, who, having confided the command of his army to La Force and Schomberg, had come thither for that purpose. Although after the loss of Pinerolo Charles Emmanuel had hastened to make overtures for peace, Richelieu had little belief in his sincerity, and Louis XIII agreed with him on the necessity of retaining so all-important an acquisition as Pinerolo. The Queen-Mother and her creatures were, however, worrying the King incessantly to spare the Duke of Savoy, and Louis, who desired peace about him, and had vainly endeavoured

¹ Monsieur had returned to France at the beginning of February, 1630, after the King had granted him the duchy of Valois, as an addition to his appanage, the lieutenancy-general in the Orléanais, and a large sum of money.

to make his mother listen to reason, sent the Cardinal to Lyons to represent to Marie more fully the condition of affairs. This he did so ably that the Queen-Mother, though sorely against her will, was obliged to admit the necessity of continuing the war.

On the 14th the King, accompanied by Bassompierre, Créquy, and Châtillon, left Grenoble with the army which had assembled there and, passing through the Bresse, entered Savoy. The three marshals were to command the army in turn, and the first period of command fell to Bassompierre, who made good use of his opportunities. He took the town and citadel of Chambéry ; compelled Rumilly to surrender ; and, pushing on with the advance-guard over the difficult roads, turned the flank of the Prince of Carignano, who commanded the main Piedmontese army, and compelled him to beat a precipitate retreat from his strong position at Conflans ; and then, crossing the Col de la Louaz, the Col de Nave, the Grand-Cœur and the Petit-Cœur, had occupied Moutiers and the Pas du Ciel, when he received a despatch from the King instructing him to resign his command to the Maréchal de Châtillon, whose turn it was to lead the army.

“ This offended me extremely,” says the marshal, “ since I did not think that, as the same troops would continue to form the advance-guard, my person alone ought to be dethroned, and that having started the hare, another should come to profit by my labours.”

However, of course, he had no alternative but to hand over the command to his colleague. But when, on June 4, the King and the Cardinal arrived at Moustier, he “ complained of the outrage that had been done him.” However, he got no satisfaction from them, as they decided that the arrangement that had been made at the outset of the campaign must be adhered to.

By the third week in June all Savoy had been conquered, with the exception of the citadel of Montmélian,

which was being closely blockaded, and Louis XIII and Richelieu returned to Grenoble, whither Bassompierre followed them. On July 10 a division of the army of Piedmont under Montmorency and d'Effiat defeated the forces of Charles Emmanuel at Avigliana and occupied Saluzzo, which the Duke of Savoy had annexed during the troubles of the League and retained at the cost of much sacrifice of territory in 1601.

These rapid successes redoubled the ill humour of Marie de' Medici, whose rancour against Richelieu was industriously stimulated by the Keeper of the Seals, Michel de Marillac, who, on the death of the Cardinal de Bérulle in October, 1629, had succeeded him as the leader of the High Catholic and Spanish party and the chief confidant of the Queen-Mother. The King, anxious to prevent any new trouble in the Royal Family, begged his mother to come to Grenoble, to give the Cardinal and himself the benefit of her counsels. But Marie excused herself, and she and Michel de Marillac did everything possible to dissuade the King from returning to the army, on the ground that his health would be endangered by contagious maladies which had broken out there. The Spaniards and Imperialists, encouraged by the knowledge of the intrigues which were proceeding at the Court of France, pressed the sieges of Mantua and Casale, and, though the latter place, ably defended by Toiras, held out bravely, on July 18 the Imperialists succeeded in taking Mantua by assault.

In the last week in July Louis XIII, who, since the beginning of the month, had been very unwell, was obliged, on account of his health, to return to Lyons, where Bassompierre obtained leave to go to Paris "to set his affairs in order."

"I arrived in Paris," he writes, "on the 21st day of August, where I found M. d'Épernon. *Monsieur*, brother of the King, came there on the morrow, and a few days later *M. le Comte*, *M. de Longueville*, and *M. de*

Guise arrived. We thought only of passing our time pleasantly. I amused myself in building Chaillot."

Now, of course, it may have been merely a coincidence that the distinguished persons above-mentioned, all of whom were hostile to Richelieu, should have arrived in Paris almost at the same time as Bassompierre. But any way, it was an unfortunate one for the marshal.

Richelieu, although very uneasy at the thought of leaving the King exposed to the hostile influences of the Queen-Mother and her friends, remained in Savoy for nearly a month after Louis XIII had returned to Lyons, although the King's confessor, Père Suffren, wrote urging him to rejoin the Court, "in order to disperse all the clouds which had gathered." At length, towards the end of August, the plague, which was devastating Savoy, attacked his own quarters, and obliged him to return.

On September 22, Louis XIII, who had been in very poor health for some weeks, was attacked by fever, accompanied by dysentery. By the 27th he was so ill that his physicians felt obliged to warn him that it was time to think of his conscience, and he demanded the Viaticum, bade farewell to his mother, his wife, and his Minister, and prepared for death. On the morning of the 30th no one believed that he could live through the day.

The two Queens and all the Court were loud in their expressions of grief; but this did not prevent them from making their arrangements for the morrow of the catastrophe which appeared so imminent, and, though we may discredit the story that Anne of Austria instructed her *dame d'atours*, the Comtesse du Fargis, to write to *Monsieur* reminding him of the project, more than once mooted, of a marriage between them in the event of the King's death, there can be no doubt that the Queen-Mother was preparing to revenge herself upon "her ungrateful servant," so soon as his protector should have drawn his last breath.

As for Richelieu, his state of mind may be imagined. He saw his power crumbling away, his liberty, and perhaps even his life, threatened, and, what he valued more than life, his work, on the point of being undone, and France stepping back into the chaos at home and impotence abroad from which he had extricated her. "I know not," he wrote to Schomberg, "whether I am dead or alive."

But, before the day was over, the sick monarch, to the astonishment of all, and the mortification, it is to be feared, of not a few, took a turn for the better, and on the morrow was out of danger. "By the grace of God," wrote the Cardinal to d'Effiat, "the King is out of danger, but, to tell you the truth, I know not whether I am. I pray God that He sends me death in His mercy sooner than the occasion of relapsing into the state in which we have been."

On learning that the King was ill and that his illness was "not without danger," Bassompierre returned in all haste to Lyons, where he arrived on October 1, the day after the crisis. After paying his respects to the King, he went to salute the two Queens, the Princesses of the Blood, and the Cardinal, and then proceeded to the house of a M. d'Alaincourt, an old friend of his, with whom he always stayed when at Lyons.

Richelieu had received Bassompierre very cordially and had "spoken to him in great confidence." But next day his manner changed and became cold and distant. The marshal sought out Châteauneuf, who, until he was so unfortunate as to succumb to the *beaux yeux* of Madame de Chevreuse, was one of the most faithful of the cardinal's henchmen, and inquired what he could possibly have done to offend his Eminence. Upon which Châteauneuf told him that the Cardinal had been informed that Bassompierre had "brought certain messages on behalf of *Monsieur* to the Queen-Mother, with a power to arrest him [Richelieu] if harm came to the King."

Bassompierre answered that "he dared swear that *Monsieur* never had such an idea, because when he [Bassompierre] left Paris, he was doubtful whether the King was in danger.

Châteauneuf then said that there were certain circumstances which, in his Eminence's opinion, appeared to confirm the rumour which had reached him, namely, that the Maréchal de Créquy was staying at the same house as Bassompierre ; that the Duc de Guise had travelled part of the way from Paris with the marshal and was now occupying the adjoining house, and that Bassompierre visited the Queen-Mother every day, and the Princesse de Conti, M. de Guise's sister and one of her Majesty's most devoted adherents, every evening.

"I told him," says Bassompierre, "that I had not seen *Monsieur* the morning I left Paris, and that I had not taken leave of him the previous evening ; that I had not yet said a word to the Queen-Mother, except aloud ; that it was the duty of a courier, and not of a marshal of France, to be the bearer of such powers, which would have come too late, if God had not miraculously cured the King ; that, for ten years past, I had had no other lodging at Lyons except the house of my old friend M. d'Alaincourt ; that it was not just of late that M. de Créquy and I had lived as brothers, but since our first acquaintance, and that I had frequented the Princesse de Conti's society for thirty years ; that La Ville-aux-Clercs¹ and Guillemeau,² who had travelled post with me, could bear witness that M. de Guise had left Paris after me, that he had passed me the first day of my journey when I slept at La Chapelle-la-Reine, that I had overtaken him the following evening at Pouilly, and that at Moulins, since he was unable to follow me, I preceded him ; and that I begged him to assure the Cardinal that I was not a man of faction or intrigue ; that I always concerned myself with serving the King well and faithfully first, and afterwards my friends, of whom he was one of the chief, and I had

¹ Henri Auguste de Loménie, Seigneur de la Ville-aux-Clercs, Secretary of State.

² Charles Guillemeau, physician-in-ordinary to the King.

promised him very humble service. This he promised to do, and having been to see him [the Cardinal], I told him in substance the same things, with which he professed to be satisfied."

It is difficult to decide how far Bassompierre was sincere in these protestations. That he had been actually charged by *Monsieur* with such a commission as the Cardinal suspected may be doubted, but it is practically certain that, if not an active member of the anti-Richelieu cabal, he was in full sympathy with its main object. Nor is this a matter for surprise. As a great noble, he resented Richelieu's determination to curtail the power and privileges of the nobility and bring them into subjection. As a marshal of France, he disliked the interference of an ecclesiastic in military matters, and he had not forgiven the Cardinal for having supported the pretensions of Angoulême during the siege of La Rochelle, thereby obliging him to accept a separate command and depriving him of the honour of driving the English from Ré. As a courtier and a favourite of the King, he found it difficult to reconcile himself to the sight of a Minister exercising such unbounded authority that no one could any longer hope for advancement except through his good offices.

And there was yet another reason why Bassompierre should have desired to see the success of the cabal. The Guises, and in particular the duke and his sister, the Princesse de Conti, were among its most energetic supporters. The former was now bitterly hostile to Richelieu, who had lately deprived him of the post of Admiral of the Levant, while his sister, as we have said, was a devoted adherent of the Queen-Mother. Bassompierre had been on terms of close friendship with the Guises ever since his arrival at the French Court, and his connexion with them was now even closer than was generally suspected. For many years he had been the lover—or, at least, the most favoured lover—of the Princesse de Conti, who, following the example of Marie d'Entragues,

had presented him with a pledge of her affection in the shape of a natural son, of whom we shall have occasion to speak hereafter ; and at a date which is unknown, but was probably some time between 1624 and 1630, this intimacy had been regularised by a secret marriage.

It was only natural that Bassompierre should have sided with the party to which his wife and brother-in-law belonged, and we can hardly blame Richelieu, who no doubt knew all about the secret marriage—for there were few secrets which his army of spies did not contrive to ferret out—if he credited the marshal with hostile intentions towards him and placed his name on the list of those distinguished persons upon whom, in the event of his defeating the machinations of his enemies, he intended to take summary vengeance.

It was, however, very far from certain that he would succeed in defeating them. During the King's convalescence the two Queens were unremitting in their attentions, and Marie de' Medici took advantage of his weakness to launch all kinds of accusations against the Cardinal, whom she charged with deliberately fomenting dissensions in the Royal family and prejudicing the King's mind against his mother, wife, and brother, in order that he might dominate it entirely, and of prolonging the war for the purpose of rendering himself necessary, and of sacrificing his Majesty's health to his ambition. The danger through which Louis had just passed, and the solicitude which Anne of Austria showed for him, had brought about a sort of reconciliation between the royal pair, and the young Queen profited by this to second the admonitions and entreaties of her mother-in-law. The latter gave her unfortunate son no rest, and, at length, to free himself from her obsessions, the King promised her that the Cardinal should be dismissed so soon as peace in Italy had been re-established, or, according to another version, that he would come to a decision on the matter after his return to Paris.

CHAPTER XL

Peace is signed with the Emperor at Ratisbon—The Queen-Mother deprives Richelieu's niece Madame de Combalet of her post of *dame d'atours* and demands of Louis XIII the instant dismissal of the Cardinal—The Luxembourg interview—"The Day of Dupes"—Triumph of Richelieu—Bassompierre's explanation of his own part in this affair—His visit to Versailles—"He has arrived after the battle!"—He gives offence to Richelieu by refusing an invitation to dinner—He finds himself in semi-disgrace—*Monsieur* quarrels with the Cardinal and leaves the Court—The King again treats Bassompierre with cordiality—Departure of the Court for Compiègne—Bassompierre learns that the Queen-Mother has been placed under arrest and the Princesse de Conti exiled and that he himself is to be arrested—The marshal is advised by the Duc d'Épernon to leave France—He declines and announces his intention of going to the Court to meet his fate—He burns "more than six thousand love-letters"—His arrival at the Court—Singular conduct of the King towards him—The marshal is arrested by the Sieur de Launay, lieutenant of the Gardes du Corps, and conducted to the Bastille.

So soon as his health was re-established, the King is said to have warned Richelieu of the hostile intentions of his mother, and when, on October 19, the Court left Lyons, the Cardinal, with the object of regaining her friendship, travelled with her in the same boat from Roanne to Briare—"in complete privacy," says Bassompierre, and appears to have spared no pains to conciliate her. Marie dissembled so well that he believed that all immediate danger was over; but scarcely had she arrived in Paris than she called upon the King to carry out the promise he had made her at Lyons.

Louis pleaded the interests of the State, and demanded time to settle the troubles. But it was necessary to find other arguments. Père Joseph and Brulart de Léon, who had been sent to Ratisbon to settle with the Emperor the question of Casale and Mantua, had concluded with him a general peace (October 13). Schomberg was on the

march towards Casale, which was in the utmost peril, for the Spaniards had already captured the town and were pressing the citadel closely, when he received news of the treaty. He paid no attention to it and continued to advance. On the 26th he came in sight of the place, and a cannonade between his forces and those of the besiegers had actually begun, when the young Papal agent Mazarini, at the risk of his life, rode in between the hostile armies, waving a paper and crying: "Peace!" The proposals he brought for the evacuation of the town by the Spaniards and of the citadel by the French pending the acceptance of the Ratisbon treaty by Spain were acceded to, and the great siege of Casale came suddenly to an end.

When this agreement was known in Paris, and the war regarded as over, the Queen-Mother, refusing to listen to any remonstrance from the King, promptly deprived Richelieu's niece, Madame de Combalet, of her post as *dame d'atours*, in an interview in which she is said to have heaped the grossest abuse upon the unfortunate young woman, and demanded of her son the instant dismissal of the Cardinal. The King demurred and, to escape maternal importunities, withdrew to his hunting-lodge at Versailles; but Marie was resolved to give him no rest until she had gained his consent; and on the morning of November 10 Louis returned to Paris, and went to visit the Queen-Mother at the Luxembourg.

On his arrival at the Luxembourg, whither he was accompanied by Bassompierre, the King and his mother entered the latter's cabinet, and gave strict orders that no one should be allowed to interrupt them. They then locked the door of the cabinet, and the Queen-Mother's attendants those of the ante-chamber.

Hardly, however, had the conversation begun, when a little door leading from the chapel of the Luxembourg into the Queen's cabinet, which their Majesties had not thought of securing, gently opened, and the tall, scarlet-

robed figure and pale, thin face of the man whose fate they had met to decide appeared to their astonished eyes. Richelieu, informed of the King's return to Paris and his arrival at the Luxembourg, had formed a shrewd suspicion of what was in the wind, and had determined to be present at the interview between mother and son. Finding the doors of the ante-chamber locked, he had made his way to the cabinet along the gallery of the palace, and, on discovering the door of the cabinet also secured, had bethought himself of that which communicated with the chapel.

"All is lost ; here he is !" exclaimed the King, looking as guilty as a timid schoolboy detected by a stern master in some breach of discipline. The Cardinal advanced with a smiling face. "I will wager," said he, "that their Majesties were speaking of me." And then, turning to the Queen-Mother, he added : "Confess it, Madame." "We were," replied Marie. And then, beside herself with passion at the Minister's audacity, she broke forth into a torrent of accusations and reproaches, charging him, amongst other things, with plotting to marry his niece to the Comte de Soissons and set him upon the throne in place of the King. The Cardinal appeared to quail before the tempest ; he fell on his knees and protested his innocence ; he wept ; he was in despair. But this pretence of humility, instead of disarming the wrath of the Queen-Mother, served only to inflame it. "It is for you," she cried, turning to the King, "to decide whether you intend to prefer a valet to your mother." "It is more natural," interposed Richelieu, "that it is I who should be sacrificed." And he demanded pardon and permission to retire. The King remained silent ; Marie overwhelmed him with a fresh storm of reproaches, and he quitted the room, convinced that his power was at an end.

Louis XIII, dumbfounded by the violent scene of which he had been a witness, informed his mother that he

was quite unable to come to a decision that day, and quitted the Luxembourg.

On the following morning the King signed a despatch which his mother had extracted from him which gave the sole command of the army of Italy to Louis de Marillac and recalled Schomberg and La Force, who were adherents of the Cardinal. Then he departed for Versailles, without again seeing the Queen-Mother, but the Keeper of the Seals, Michel de Marillac, whom Marie had designated as Prime Minister in place of Richelieu, had orders to follow him.

This order appeared decisive ; all the Court believed that the Cardinal had fallen. A crowd of courtiers invaded the Luxembourg, where the Queen-Mother paraded her triumph and received their felicitations, without deigning to inconvenience herself by following the King to Versailles, as some of the more prudent of her friends urged her to do. She flattered herself that she held the place of Catherine de' Medici ; but she had none of Catherine's *finesse* and intelligence ; Catherine, in similar circumstances, would not have allowed the King out of her sight for a moment.

Anne of Austria, *Monsieur*, the Spanish Ambassador, the grandes were transported with joy ; and couriers started to carry the good news to Madrid, Vienna, Brussels, and Turin. It was reported that the hated Cardinal was busy making his preparations for departure ; that he intended to retire to the government of Le Havre, and that his mules had been seen defiling along the Pontoise road.

It would appear, in fact, that Richelieu, believing himself ruined, had for a moment contemplated taking refuge at Le Havre, but that two of his friends who had remained faithful to his fortunes, Châteauneuf and the *Président* Le Jay, had strongly opposed this resolution and persuaded him to remain in Paris. Anyway, he did so, and in the course of the afternoon he received a

message from the First Equerry, Saint-Simon, bidding him come with all speed to Versailles.

Saint-Simon and the Cardinal de la Valette, who had followed the King, had pleaded the cause of Richelieu ; but it is probable that “ reasons of State ” had pleaded still more eloquently for him. For Louis, with all his faults, did not, as we know, lack intelligence ; and now that the decision which for weeks he had postponed had to be made, he recognised that the Cardinal’s dismissal would mean his own reduction to impotence, disorder, corruption, and intrigue at home and the triumph of the enemies of France abroad. His hesitation was at an end, and he authorised Saint-Simon to send for Richelieu.

The Cardinal came ; he threw himself at the feet of the King, who raised him up and praised the zeal and fidelity which he had shown in his service. He knelt again and offered to retire, so as not to be a subject of discord between mother and son. Louis declined to accept his resignation, and then gave orders that they should be left alone together, and proceeded to discuss with the Cardinal the measures to be adopted against the cabal. It was decided that Michel de Marillac should be deprived of the Seals and banished the Court, and that another despatch should be sent to the Army of Italy, cancelling the one which was already on its way and ordering Schomberg to have the Maréchal de Marillac arrested and sent a prisoner to France. And so, while the Queen-Mother was triumphing at the Luxembourg, Richelieu triumphed at Versailles. That day—November 11, 1630—has remained famous in history as “ The Day of Dupes.”

“ The Day of Dupes ” ! This name has been attributed to Bassompierre, and no one was better able to appreciate its justice, since, whatever he may say to the contrary—and he would fain have us believe that he was only the innocent victim of circumstances—the marshal

was undoubtedly one of these dupes. But let us listen to his explanations.

He begins by denying most solemnly that before November 10 he had any knowledge that the Queen-Mother and Richelieu were at variance, except what he had gathered from "scraps of information," and that he had no idea until some time afterwards that Marie had actually demanded from the King the disgrace of the Cardinal. He accompanied Louis to the Luxembourg on the morning of the 10th, as we have mentioned, but he assures us neither the King nor the Cardinal—whom he saw that evening—said a word to him about the stormy scene in the Queen-Mother's cabinet, and that the matter was kept a profound secret between all the parties concerned.

"This quarrel," says he, "was kept so secret on all sides that no one knew anything about it or suspected it."

He then goes on to relate how on the evening of the 10th he accompanied the King to the apartments of *Monsieur*, from whom Louis had extracted a promise to be reconciled to the Cardinal.

"The King sent to summon the Cardinal, and, after saying a few words to his brother, presented the Cardinal to him, and begged him to love him and to regard him as his servant. This *Monsieur* rather coldly promised the King to do, provided that he [Richelieu] would comport himself towards him as he ought to do. I was present at this agreement, and afterwards, happening to be near the Cardinal, he drew me aside and said to me: *Monsieur* complains about me, and God knows if he has reason to do so; but the beaten pay the forfeit.' I said: 'Monsieur, do not attach any importance to what *Monsieur* says. He only does what Puylaurens and Le Coigneux counsel him to do; and when you wish to hold *Monsieur*, hold him by means of them, and you will stop him.' He said nothing to me afterwards about his quarrel;¹ and may God

¹ With the Queen-Mother.

confound me if I even suspected it! After supper I went to visit the Princesse de Conti. I had previously attended the King's *coucher*, and he did not give me any cause to suspect it. I inquired if he were leaving on the morrow ;¹ and he told me that he was not. I found the Princesse de Conti in such ignorance of this affair, that not only did she not speak of it, but I shall certainly dare to swear that she knew nothing about it.

“ On Monday, the 11th, St. Martin's Day, I came early to the apartments of the King, who told me that he was returning to Versailles. I did not imagine for what reason. I had arranged to dine with the Cardinal, whom I had been unable to see at his house since his arrival [from Lyons], and I went there towards midday. I was told that he was not there, and that he was leaving that day to go to Pontoise. Up to then I did not suspect anything, nor did I even do so, when, having re-entered the Luxembourg and the Cardinal arriving there, I accompanied him up to the door of the Queen's chamber, and he said to me : ‘ You will no longer take any account of a disgraced man like myself.’ I imagined that he intended to refer to the bad reception which *Monsieur* had given him the preceding day. I intended to wait to go and dine with him ; but M. de Longueville enticed me away to go and dine with *Monsieur* at M. de Créquy's house, as he had invited me to do. While we were there, M. de Puy-laurens said to me : ‘ Well, it is certainly true this time that our people have quarrelled, for the Queen-Mother said openly to the Cardinal yesterday that she never wished to see him again.’ I was very much astonished at this news, which was shortly afterwards confirmed by M. de Longueville. I sent at once to the Princesse de Conti to beg her very humbly to send me news ; but she swore to my man that this was the first that she had heard of it ; and that she begged me to furnish her with particulars concerning it. I knew nothing about it, save that Madame de Combalet had taken leave[†] of the Queen-Mother and that the King and the Cardinal had left Paris. In the evening *Monsieur le Comte* took me to the Queen-Mother's, but she never spoke, except to the Queen and the princesses.

[†] For Versailles,

“ Tuesday, the 12th.—I went to Chaillot, where I spent the whole day, and, on my return, I met Lisle, who told me that M. de Marillac had been deprived of the Seals and sent under an escort of the Guards to Touraine.

“ Wednesday, the 13th.—M. de la Vrillièr, returning at a gallop from Versailles; told me that M. de Châteauneuf had been appointed Keeper of the Seals, and, in the evening at the Queen-Mother’s, I saw M. de la Ville-aux-Clercs, who had come to inform her on behalf of the King.”

Now, Bassompierre is generally regarded as a singularly reliable chronicler, but we must remember that his *Mémoires* were written, or rather arranged and revised, during his imprisonment in the Bastille, and that there was always a by no means remote possibility that they might be impounded and placed under the eyes of Louis XIII and Richelieu. It was therefore manifestly to his interest to make out as good a case for himself as he could, and to pose as the victim of unfounded suspicions. When he declares that on the evening of the 10th he had no suspicion of what had taken place at the Luxembourg, and that he was positive that the Princesse de Conti knew nothing about it, he is probably speaking the truth. For it was not until the following morning that Louis XIII signed the despatch appointing the Maréchal de Marillac to the command of the army of Italy, and until the King had taken what appeared to her a decisive step against Richelieu, the Queen-Mother may well have refrained from speaking of the matter to anyone, even to so close a friend and confidante as the Princesse de Conti. But when he asks us to believe that until the afternoon of the 11th, by which time the affair must have been already known to half the Court, and, by his own admission, *was* known to *Monsieur’s* favourite Puylaurens and to the Duc de Longueville, both he and his wife were still in ignorance, and that when the Cardinal said to him: “ You will no longer take any account of a disgraced man like myself,” he really believed that he was referring to



Neus fleuretons les ans, les moy s, et les iournes,
Peur cueillir de leur mieux nôstre miel adouci.
Mais nez iours ne sont rien, nez moy s, ne nez annes
Pres les fleurs, et beautes de ceste Dame cy.
Thomas de Leu sculp. Derochers exc. ...

CHARLOTTE LOUISE DE LORRAINE, PRINCESSE DE CONTI.

From an engraving by Thomas de Leu.

his differences with *Monsieur*, we must entirely decline to do so.

On the morning of the 14th, the Spanish merchant Alphonso Lopez,¹ who was one of Richelieu's secret agents, came to visit Bassompierre and "told him that he would do well to go to Versailles to see the King and the Cardinal." The marshal, however, learning that the new Keeper of the Seals, Châteauneuf, with whom he was on very friendly terms, was coming to Paris that day to pay his respects to the two Queens, thought it advisable to defer his visit to the morrow, and, meanwhile, to go and offer his compliments to Châteauneuf on his appointment and ascertain from him what reception he was likely to receive.

"He told me," says Bassompierre, "that he had not perceived that there was anything against me, but that I should do well to go and present myself. This I did on Friday, the 15th. I entered the chamber of the King, who, so soon as he caught sight of me, observed, loud enough for me to hear: 'He has arrived after the battle,' and greeted me very coldly. I assumed a cheerful countenance, as though nothing had been the matter. Finally, the King told me that he should be at Saint-Germain on the Monday, and that I was to bring his Swiss Guards there. At the same time, I heard Saint-Simon, the First Equerry, say to *Monsieur le Comte*: '*Monsieur*, do not invite him to dinner, nor me either, and he will return as he came.' The insolence of this nasty little wretch (*petit punais*) put me in a rage inwardly, but I concealed it, for the laughers were not on my side, though I knew not why. Nevertheless, *Monsieur le Comte* said to me: 'If you will dine with me, I have three or four dishes above for us to eat.' '*Monsieur*,' I replied, 'I have asked MM. de Créquy and de Saint-Luc and the Comte de Sault to dine with me to-day at Chaillot, and they are awaiting me; but I thank you very humbly.' Upon that the Cardinal arrived. He greeted me coldly

¹ See p. 402 *supra*.

and spoke to me rather indifferently, and then went with the King into his cabinet. I began to talk to *Monsieur le Comte*, when Armaignac ¹ came from the Cardinal to ask me to dine with him. But, as I had just refused *Monsieur le Comte*, before whom he spoke, I made the same excuse as I had done before ; with which the Cardinal was offended, and said so to the King."

On the 18th Bassompierre went to Saint-Germain, where the King "gave him the worst reception in the world." He returned two days later, and was again received in the most frigid manner. He decided to remain there, in the hope that his Majesty might relent, and stayed for three weeks, during which the King never spoke to him, except to give him the password. The two Queens were also in a sort of semi-disgrace, for though Louis treated them with every courtesy, in public it was only on very rare occasions that he entered their private apartments. Beringhen and Jaquinot, two of the King's first *valets de chambre*, who had been mixed up in secret intrigues against Richelieu, were banished the Court, but for the present no further steps were taken against the Cardinal's more prominent enemies. On the other hand, Montmorency and Toiras were created marshals of France, in order to secure them ; and, to keep *Monsieur* quiet, the Cardinal bought the good offices of his two favourites, Puylaurens and Le Coigneux, the former by the promise that he should be created a duke, and the latter by the charge of *Président au mortier* in the Parlement and the present of a large sum of money.

Meanwhile, efforts were made to persuade the Queen-Mother to be reconciled to the Cardinal, and Louis XIII sent Père Suffren and the Nuncio Bagni to Marie to offer never to oblige her to restore the relatives of Richelieu to their posts in her Household, provided she would consent to resume her place in the Council. This she refused to do, so long as the Cardinal sat there.

¹ Jean d'Armaignac, one of the King's *valets de chambre*.

With the New Year intrigues began again. The *Président Le Coigneux*, under the impression that the new Keeper of the Seals, Châteauneuf, was working to ruin him, persuaded *Monsieur* to break with the Cardinal and quit the Court. On the morning of January 30, Gaston went to Richelieu's hotel, informed the Cardinal, in a threatening tone, that he renounced his friendship, since he had failed in all the promises which he had made him; then, refusing to listen to any explanation, he added that he was retiring to his appanage and that, "if he were molested, he should defend himself very well." And, the same day, he left Paris for Orléans.

On learning of the abrupt departure of *Monsieur*, Bassompierre went to the Cardinal for his orders, as the King was still at Saint-Germain, when Richelieu told him that he had sent in all haste to acquaint his Majesty with what had happened and to counsel his immediate return to Paris. Louis XIII arrived that same evening and alighted at the Cardinal's hotel, where Bassompierre was awaiting him. To his surprise, the King greeted him most cordially, presented him with a wild boar which he had killed that day, and, after visiting the Cardinal, invited Bassompierre to enter his coach and accompany him to the Louvre.

On the way Louis informed the marshal that "he was going to scold the Queen his mother for having persuaded his brother to leave the Court." Bassompierre answered that, if the Queen-Mother had done so, she would be much to blame, but he should be greatly surprised if she had counselled such a thing. To which the King rejoined that he was positive she had, "on account of the hatred which she entertained for the Cardinal."

A few days later Louis XIII announced his intention of spending the Carnival at Compiègne, whither the two Queens decided to follow him, for Marie cherished the illusion that, with the aid of her daughter-in-law, she might yet succeed in undermining the power of the

Cardinal, and she was determined not to repeat the fault she had committed on the Day of Duples.

On February 16, the day before the Court set out for Compiègne, Bassompierre, who had been given permission to remain in Paris, went to take leave of their Majesties. The King received him very graciously and promised him a *gratification* to compensate him for the heavy expenses which he had incurred during his embassy to Switzerland. Afterwards the marshal went to visit the Princesse de Conti, who was to accompany the Court to Compiègne. Little did he imagine as he bade his wife farewell that they were never to meet again !

In the afternoon of Sunday, February 23, as Bassompierre, who had been dining with the Maréchal de Créquy, was on his way to the Place-Royale to visit his brother-in-law Saint-Luc, his coach had to pull up, owing to the road being blocked by a waggon on which was a sumptuous four-poster bed. He sent one of his servants to inquire to whom the bed belonged, and was told that it was the property of the Abbé de Foix, a meddlesome ecclesiastic, who had been concerned somewhat prominently in the recent intrigues against Richelieu, and that it was on its way to the Bastille, whither its owner had been conveyed a prisoner that morning. From the fact that Foix had been arrested Bassompierre inferred that the Cardinal had resumed the offensive against his enemies ; and this surmise proved to be only too correct.

That evening, as Bassompierre was about to set out for the house of his friend Saint-Géran, to witness a play, which was to be followed by a ball, he received a message from d'Épernon begging him to come to him at once. On his arrival, the duke informed him that the King and Court had quitted Compiègne that morning for Senlis, leaving the Queen-Mother under arrest at the château ; that the Princesse de Conti had been exiled to her brother's estate at Eu, by a *lettre de cachet* ; that Vautier, the Queen-Mother's first physician, had been arrested and

conveyed to Senlis, and, finally, that he had learned on good authority that it had been proposed to arrest Bassompierre, Créquy, and himself. He added that no resolution had as yet been taken against Créquy or himself, but it had been decided to arrest Bassompierre when the King returned to Paris on the Tuesday, and that he had sent for him to warn him of his danger.

Bassompierre asked d'Épernon what he advised him to do, and what he proposed to do himself. The old noble replied that, if he were only fifty years old—the age of the marshal—he would not remain in Paris a single hour, and would make for some place of safety, from which he would be afterwards able to make his peace; but that, since he was nearly eighty and had no desire to play the courtier any longer at his age, he should employ all the influence he possessed to disarm the resentment of the King and the Cardinal, at least so far as to obtain permission to retire to his government and spend the rest of his days there in peace. With Bassompierre, however, the case was different. He was still comparatively young, and could afford to wait until Fortune smiled again; and he therefore advised him to leave France at once and offered him the loan of 50,000 écus to enable him to live a couple of years abroad in a style befitting his rank, which he could repay him when his exile was at an end.

"I thanked him very humbly," says Bassompierre, "first for his good counsel and then for his offer, and told him that my modesty prevented me from accepting the latter and my conscience from following the other, since I was perfectly innocent of any offence and had never committed any action which was not rather deserving of praise and reward than of punishment; that I had always sought glory before profit, and that, preferring as I did my honour, not only to my liberty, but to life itself, I should never compromise it by a flight which might cause my integrity to be suspected and doubted; that for thirty years I had served France and applied myself

to making my fortune there, and that I would not now, when I was approaching the age of fifty, seek a new country, and that having devoted to the King my service and my life, I might as well give him my liberty also, which he would soon restore to me, when he recollected my services and my fidelity ; that, at the worst, I should prefer to grow old and to die in prison, judged by everyone innocent and my master ungrateful, than by an ill-advised flight to cause myself to be deemed guilty and suspected of ingratitude for the honours and charges which the King had bestowed upon me ; that I could not believe that I should be thrown into prison without having committed any offence, nor retained there without any charge against me ; but that, if both were to happen, I should support it with great firmness and moderation."

He concluded by declaring that, instead of taking to flight, it was his intention to go on the morrow to Senlis to present himself to the King, in order to justify himself, if he were accused, or to go to prison, if he were suspected, or even to die, if his ill fortune or the fury of his enemies went to that extremity.

When he had finished speaking, d'Épernon embraced him, with tears in his eyes, and said : " I know not what will happen to you, and I pray God with all my heart that it may be nothing but good ; but I have never known a gentleman better born than you, nor who better deserved all good fortune. You have enjoyed it up to the present. May God preserve it for you ! And, although I fear the resolution which you have taken, nevertheless, after having heard and considered your reasons, I approve of it and counsel you to follow it."

The marshal and d'Épernon then proceeded to Saint-Géran's house, where they found Créquy, whom the duke informed of the warning which had reached him and of what Bassompierre intended to do. Créquy expressed his approval of his resolution, and said that, for his part, he should do what he could to avert the storm, but that he should not run away from it. After the ball

was over, they all three went to sup at Madame de Choisy's house, where they were presently joined by the Duc de Chevreuse, who did not appear to be much affected by the exile of his sister, the Princesse de Conti, and was as gay as usual. As they were leaving, the Comte du Plessis-Praslin, who had been sent by the King to convey to Chevreuse an official notification of his sister's disgrace, arrived, and informed the duke that the princess had been exiled, not from any hostility which his Majesty entertained towards the House of Guise, but "for the good of his service."

On the following morning Bassompierre rose before daybreak, and, foreseeing that, if he were arrested his house would be searched, burned "more than six thousand love-letters" which he had received from various fair ladies during his long career of gallantry, "these being the only papers I possessed," says he, "which might be able to injure anyone a little." This task accomplished, he set out for Senlis, in company with the Cardinal de la Valette, the Comte de Soissons, the Duc de Bouillon and the Comte de Gramont. As they were on the point of starting, Soissons warned Bassompierre that he had positive information that it was intended to arrest him, and advised him to make his escape, which he offered to facilitate. The marshal thanked him, but declined, declaring that, "as he had nothing sinister on his conscience, he feared nothing," and that he proposed to have the honour of accompanying *Monsieur le Comte* to Senlis.

"On our arrival," says he, "we found the King in the Queen's chamber, with her and the Princesse de Guymené. He approached us and said: 'Here is good company,' and, then having talked a little to *Monsieur le Comte* and the Cardinal de la Valette, he conversed with me for some time, telling me that he had done what he could to reconcile the Queen his mother with the Cardinal, but had failed. He said nothing to me about the Princess

de Conti. Then I told him that I had been warned that he intended to have me arrested, and that I had come to him in order that he might have no trouble in finding me, and that, if I knew what prison he designed for me, I would repair thither voluntarily, without his having to send me. Upon which he said these very words : ' How, Betstein, can you have thought that I intended to do so ? You know that I love you.' And I truly believe that, at that moment, he spoke as he felt. Then they came to inform him that the Cardinal was in his chamber, and he took leave of the company, telling me to send the company which was on guard in advance early on the morrow, in order that it might be able to mount guard in Paris. Then he gave me the password.

" We remained for some time in the Queen's chamber, and then all went to sup at M. de Longueville's, and from there returned to the Queen's, whither the King came after supper. I saw plainly that there was something against me, for the King always kept his head bent down, playing on the guitar, without looking at me, and during the whole evening he never spoke a word to me. I spoke of this to M. de Gramont, as we were going together to sleep in a lodging which had been made ready for us."

The next morning the anticipated blow fell :

" On Tuesday morning, the 25th day of February, I rose at six o'clock, and was standing before the fire in my dressing-gown, when the Sieur de Launay, lieutenant of the Gardes du Corps, entered my chamber and said to me : ' Monsieur, it is with tears in my eyes and a heart which bleeds that I, who for twenty years have been your soldier and have always been under your orders, am obliged to inform you that the King has commanded me to arrest you.' I did not experience any particular emotion at these words, and said to him : ' Monsieur, you will have no great difficulty about that, seeing that I have come here expressly for that purpose, because I had been warned of it. I have been all my life submissive to the wishes of the King, who is able to dispose of me and of my liberty as he wills.' Upon which I inquired if he desired my servants to withdraw ; but he answered that he did not, since he had no other orders than to arrest me and

afterwards to send to inform the King of it, and that I could speak to my people, write, and send for anything that I wished for, and that everything was permitted. M. de Gramont then rose from his bed and approached me weeping, at which I began to laugh, telling him that if he were not more distressed at my imprisonment than I was, he would feel no resentment, as in truth I did not trouble myself much about it, not believing that I should remain there long.¹

"Launay did not permit any of the Guards who were with him to enter my chamber, and, shortly afterwards, one of the King's coaches, his Musketeers and thirty of his Light Horse arrived before my lodging. I entered the coach with Launay only, meeting as I went out *Madame la Princesse*, who appeared touched by my disgrace. We preceded the King by two hundred paces all the way to the Porte de Saint-Martin, where I turned to the left, and, passing through the Place-Royale, was brought to the Bastille. Here I dined with the governor, M. du Tremblay,² who afterwards conducted me to the chamber in which *Monsieur le Prince* had formerly been confined, where they shut me up with a single valet to attend on me."

¹ "On the morrow, the Maréchal de Bassompierre, who had come to Senlis to meet the King, was arrested in the morning by de Launay, lieutenant of the *Gardes du Corps*, and brought by the Musketeers and the Light Horse of the King to the Bastille. He was very much regretted in Paris on account of his open-heartedness and good-nature. He was the least distressed by it of all, and took his misfortune as a jest. He was imprisoned, not so much for what he had done as for what he might do."—Copy of a journal of the Court in the Godefroy collection, cited by the Marquis de Chantérac. *Mémoires du Maréchal de Bassompierre* (Edition Société de l'Histoire de France).

² Charles Le Clerc, Seigneur du Tremblay, younger brother of Père Joseph.

CHAPTER XLI

Bassompierre in the Bastille—He is informed that he has been imprisoned “from fear lest he might be induced to do wrong”—*Monsieur* retires to Lorraine—The marshal’s nephew the Marquis de Bassompierre is ordered to leave France—After a few weeks of captivity, Bassompierre solicits his liberty, which is refused—He falls seriously ill, but recovers—Death of his wife the Princesse de Conti—Flight of the Queen-Mother to Brussels—Death of Bassompierre’s brother the Marquis de Removille—Execution of the Maréchal de Marillac—Montmorency’s revolt—Trial and execution of the duke—Hopes of liberty, which, however, do not materialise—Arrest of Châteauneuf—Arrival of the Chevalier de Jars in the Bastille—A grim experience—Bassompierre disposes of his post of Colonel-General of the Swiss to the Marquis de Coislin—The marshal’s hopes of liberty constantly flattered and as constantly deceived—Malignity of Richelieu—The ravages committed by the contending armies upon his estates in Lorraine reduce Bassompierre to the verge of ruin—The marshal’s niece, Madame de Beuvron solicits her uncle’s liberty of Richelieu—Mocking answer of the Cardinal—Some notes written by Bassompierre in the margin of a copy of Dupleix’s history are published under his name, but without his authority—The historian complains to the Cardinal—Arrest of Valbois for reciting a sonnet attacking Richelieu for his treatment of Bassompierre—Apprehensions of the marshal—His despair at his continued detention—Grief occasioned him by the death of a favourite dog—The Duc de Guise dies in exile.

ON the following day the Governor of the Bastille came to visit Bassompierre, and told the marshal that he was instructed by the King to inform him that “he had not caused him to be arrested for any fault which he had committed, and that he regarded him as his good servant, but from fear lest he might be induced to do wrong,” and that he should not remain long in confinement. This assurance, Bassompierre tells us, afforded him great consolation. Du Tremblay added that his Majesty had given orders that the marshal was to be allowed complete liberty, save that of leaving the fortress, and to take exercise in any part of the Bastille, while he was also to

be permitted to have with him such of his servants as he might choose to attend him. Bassompierre, however, contented himself with sending for two lackeys and a cook, who were lodged in a room adjoining his own.

A day or two later Bassompierre sent to inquire of the King if his nephew, the Marquis de Bassompierre, eldest son of the marshal's surviving brother, the Marquis de Removille, who was on a visit to France, might be permitted to visit him. His Majesty replied that, not only would he permit, but even wished, him to do so, and that he loved him, both for himself and on account of his uncle.

In the second week in March, Louis XIII quitted Paris and marched on Orléans, in order to compel *Monsieur*, who was threatening civil war, to return to his obedience. The Marquis de Bassompierre requested permission to accompany his Majesty, which was readily accorded, and his uncle furnished him with money to defray the expenses of this journey. On learning of the King's approach, Gaston fled towards Burgundy, accompanied by the Duc de Roannez, the Comte de Moret, and some troops which he had raised. Bellegarde, Governor of Burgundy, declared in his favour, but made no attempt to raise the province in insurrection ; and the prince proceeded to Franche-Comté and thence to Lorraine. The King followed his brother so far as Dijon, where he launched a Declaration against his companions (March 30), and then retraced his steps. The fact that *Monsieur* had again retired to Lorraine had incensed him against Charles IV and all his subjects, and he sent to inform the Marquis de Bassompierre that " it was not agreeable that he should follow him or even remain in France."

When, towards the end of April, Louis XIII returned to Paris, the marshal solicited his liberty ; but his request was refused. Soon afterwards he fell ill " from a very dangerous swelling of the stomach, arising perhaps from his not having taken the air," for, for some reason which

he does not tell us, he had not left his room since he entered the Bastille two months before. So ill did he become that he thought he was dying, but having been persuaded to take daily exercise on the terrace, his health soon began to improve.

About the same time, a loss more bitter even than that of his liberty befell Bassompierre. The Princesse de Conti, to whom he was secretly married and was undoubtedly most tenderly attached, died at the Château of Eu on the last day of April, a victim, according to her contemporaries, to the grief which the misfortunes which had overwhelmed those whom she held dear had occasioned her. For, not only had the Queen-Mother been disgraced and her husband sent to the Bastille, but her eldest brother, the Duc de Guise, had deemed it prudent to go into voluntary exile in Italy, to escape a worse fate.

Very discreet in general concerning the names of the ladies with whom he had successes—“*Bassompierre fait l'amour sans dire mot*,” writes a Court poet of the time—the marshal preserves about his relations with the princess a scrupulous reserve, and his restrained emotion when he announces her death is the only indication of his sentiments for her which are to be found in his *Mémoires*:

“I learned at the same time of the death of the Princesse de Conti, which occasioned me such affliction as was merited by the honour which, since my arrival at the Court, I had received from this princess, who, besides so many other perfections which have rendered her worthy of admiration, had that of being a very good and very obliging friend. I shall honour her memory and regret her for the rest of my days. She was so overwhelmed by grief at seeing herself separated from the Queen-Mother, with whom she had remained since the latter came to France, so afflicted at seeing her family persecuted and her friends and servants in disgrace, that she was neither willing nor able to survive, and died at Eu, on Monday, the last day of April, of that unhappy year 1631.”

Assured of the firm support of the King, Richelieu

continued to carry matters with a high hand. The Parlement of Paris refused to register the Royal Declaration of March 30, which, without inculpating *Monsieur*, stigmatised the accomplices of his flight as guilty of *lèse-majesté*. On May 13 the magistrates were summoned in a body to the Louvre, where Louis XIII curiously reminded them that their duty was to render justice to his subjects, and not to concern themselves with affairs of State. And, to give point to this rebuke, several presidents and counsellors were banished from Paris.

The excitement which the dissensions in the Royal family had aroused, and the fact that public opinion was distinctly hostile to the Cardinal, rendered it essential to remove the Queen-Mother so far as possible from the Court and Paris. Louis XIII requested her to retire to Moulins, with the government of the Bourbonnais, as a kind of honourable exile. She consented, but quickly altered her mind, pretending that her son had fixed upon Moulins in order to send her from there to Florence. Then the King offered her Angers as a residence. To this also she objected, but agreed to go to Nevers for a time. When, however, she learned that *Monsieur* had quitted France, she declined to budge from Compiègne.

Early in July, the King, finding that neither his entreaties nor his orders had any effect upon his mother, sent her a kind of ultimatum. Instead of obeying, Marie resolved to retire to a frontier town and from there dictate her conditions. One of her adherents, Vardes, who commanded at La Capelle, in the name of his father, offered to deliver the place to her; but the King, warned of his intention, sent the old Marquis de Vardes in hot haste to La Capelle, who won over the garrison and expelled his son and the Queen-Mother's friends from the town. When Marie, who had escaped from Compiègne on July 18, approached La Capelle, she was met by the younger Vardes, who informed her of the failure of their plans, which left her no alternative but to cross the Flemish

frontier and seek an asylum with the Spaniards at Brussels.

At the beginning of 1632 some hope of his regaining his liberty was held out to Bassompierre. "But," says he, "I believe that this was done rather to redouble my sufferings by deceiving my hopes than to alleviate my misfortunes." Anyway, he remained a prisoner, and soon afterwards another sorrow befell him in the death of his brother, the Marquis de Removille, from an illness caused by the hardships he had undergone while serving in the Imperial army during the preceding year.

Early in May Bassompierre learned of the tragic fate of his fellow-marshall, Louis de Marillac, who, after having been kept a prisoner at Sainte-Menehould for several months, was brought to trial before a special commission sitting at Richelieu's own château of Rueil, on charges of malversation committed while in command of the Army of Champagne, found guilty, condemned to death and executed in the Place de Grève two days later.

A still more striking example of the danger of crossing the path of the terrible Cardinal—for no one doubted that had not Louis de Marillac been so ill-advised as to desert Richelieu's cause for that of the Queen-Mother, little or nothing would have been heard of his weakness for enriching himself at the expense of the State—was afforded in the following autumn.

In September *Monsieur* and his friends, counting on Austro-Spanish aid, which, however, failed them completely, attempted an invasion of France. The Duc de Montmorency, Governor of Languedoc, irritated by the growing power of Richelieu and his determination to reduce great nobles like himself to political impotence, took up arms in Gaston's cause. Defeated and made prisoner by Schomberg at Castelnau-dary, he was brought to trial for high treason before the Parlement of Toulouse. Extraordinary efforts were made to save him, but all to no purpose, and on October 29, 1632, the head of "the

noblest, wealthiest, handsomest and most pious gentleman in the kingdom" rolled on the scaffold.¹

Richelieu took advantage of Montmorency's revolt to remove all hostile or suspected governors of provinces and replace them by his own friends. He himself had already obtained the government of Brittany and been created duke and peer. He was triumphing everywhere, at home and abroad.

At the beginning of the following year Bassompierre had again great hopes of recovering his liberty. Schomberg sent him word that, on the return of the King from the South, he would be released, and he learned that both Louis XIII and the Cardinal had said as much to several persons. However, he was again doomed to disappointment, the fact that *Monsieur*, after making his submission, had quitted France again, this time for Flanders, being the pretext for his continued detention.

"In place of liberating me," writes the poor marshal, "they deprived me of that portion of my salary which had been paid me during the two preceding years, notwithstanding that I was a prisoner, amounting to one-third of what I had been accustomed to draw every year. This made me see plainly that it was intended to keep me eternally in the Bastille."

On February 25—the same day on which two years before Bassompierre had been sent to the Bastille—Châteauneuf, the Keeper of the Seals, who had foolishly allowed himself to be drawn by Madame de Chevreuse, with whom he was madly in love, into a fresh conspiracy against Richelieu, was arrested at Saint-Germain-en-Laye and conducted to the Château of Angoulême, where he remained in close confinement until the Cardinal's death,

¹ Montmorency met his death with calm resignation and Christian fortitude, and, after hearing his sentence, begged that the time of his execution might be hastened by two hours, in order that he might die at the same hour as his Saviour. As a proof that he died with no feeling of resentment against Richelieu, he bequeathed to the Cardinal a painting of the martyrdom of St. Sebastian, one of the finest pictures in his possession.

ten years later. At the same time, the gates of the Bastille opened to admit his nephew, the Marquis de Leuville, and several other persons who had been concerned in the affair, including Bassompierre's old friend, the Chevalier de Jars.

The Cardinal attached great importance to the arrest of Jars, as he believed that he might be induced to reveal the part which Anne of Austria had played in the conspiracy. But the chevalier, if a somewhat feather-brained, was a brave and honourable man, and, though he was kept in close confinement for nearly a year and subjected to repeated examinations by his Eminence's myrmidons, he steadfastly refused to make the least admission that might incriminate the Queen or any of her friends. Finally, he was transferred to Troyes, and then brought to trial for high treason before a special commission, at the head of which was the notorious Laffemas, who was known as "the Cardinal's executioner," and made it his boast that he could condemn any man, if he had but two lines of his writing. Laffemas bullied and browbeat the prisoner and "did all the mean things that the base soul is capable of suggesting,"¹ but to no purpose, for he could wring nothing from him. Accordingly, the judges proceeded to pass sentence of death on Jars, who was in due course conducted to the scaffold, "where he made his appearance with a demeanour full of courage, smiling at his enemies and prepared to meet death without flinching."² But it was only a grim farce after all, for Richelieu had nothing to gain by the removal of such small fry as the chevalier, and the only object of the trial had been to intimidate him into betraying his accomplices. And so, at the moment when the condemned man was about to lay his head on the block, Laffemas interrupted the proceedings by producing an order from the King which remitted the capital sentence and directed that the chevalier should be conducted back to the Bastille.

¹ Madame de Motteville, *Mémoires*.

² *Ibid.*

At the beginning of 1634 Bassompierre received a promise that his salary as Colonel-General of the Swiss, which had been suspended the previous year, should be paid, but this promise was not kept. In the following September, however, he learned that the King had given orders that he was to receive it, but, pressed by his creditors, who since his imprisonment had given him no rest, and believing that, if he ceased to command the Swiss, one of the chief reasons for his continued detention would be removed, he begged Richelieu, through the governor of the Bastille, to obtain the King's permission to sell his post. This was granted, and he also obtained permission to offer it to the Marquis de Rochefort, a friend of Du Tremblay. Rochefort, however, would give no more than 400,000 livres, and the marshal, who while at liberty had refused double that sum, declined to sell at this price. Thereupon Rochefort endeavoured to persuade Richelieu to compel Bassompierre to accept his offer; but though the Cardinal would not do this, the order for the payment of the marshal's salary was cancelled, and "he continued his miserable imprisonment in the Bastille with great inconvenience in his domestic affairs."

Towards the middle of December, Du Tremblay came to visit the marshal and told him that he was commissioned to make him an offer for his post, which, if he accepted, his liberty was assured. The persons who had empowered him to do this, whose names he was not at liberty to mention at present, would not go beyond 400,000 livres, but they were people of great influence at Court, who could powerfully assist him in obtaining his release. Bassompierre consented, on condition that the arrears of his salary were paid, and Du Tremblay promised that his brother Père Joseph should go to Rueil and speak to the Cardinal about this. A day or two later Du Tremblay informed him that Père Joseph and the two Bouthilliers had undertaken to arrange the matter with

Richelieu, and that he thought that he would leave the Bastille before Christmas. And he gave him to understand that the influential persons for whom he was acting were the Baron de Pontchâteau and his son, the Marquis de Coislin, who was married to a daughter of Pierre Séguier, Châteauneuf's successor in the post of Keeper of the Seals.

At the end of the year Louis XIII gave his consent to the Marquis de Coislin succeeding Bassompierre in the command of the Swiss.

“ And then it was divulged that the said Marquis de Coislin would be Colonel-General of the Swiss, and the Keeper of the Seals sent me some compliments on the matter through M. du Tremblay ; and the rumour of my release, which six weeks before had been very strong, augmented to such a degree, that a number of persons came every day to the Bastille to see if I were still there ; and it was regarded as certain that I should be released at Epiphany.”

Epiphany came and went, and Bassompierre still remained in the Bastille, the population of which was about this time increased by the arrival of several persons who were suspected of being concerned with Puylaurens and Du Fargis, formerly French Ambassador at Madrid, in treasonable relations with Spain. These two were imprisoned at Vincennes, where Puylaurens died some months later.

On February 16 Bassompierre received a visit from the younger Bouthillier.

“ He assured me,” says he, “ of the favour of the King and the affection of the Cardinal, as also of my liberation, but without specifying the time. He told me further that the King was nominating the Marquis de Coislin as Colonel-General of the Swiss in my place, who would pay me, in consideration of that, 400,000 livres in cash, and, as to that which concerned my pay and salary due to me for the said charge, my friends,

namely his father, himself and Père Joseph, did not wish to make any proposal on that matter, but would leave it to myself to negotiate after my release. And in this I had no alternative but to acquiesce."

The 400,000 livres was duly paid, the money being brought to the Bastille, by Lopez and Séguier's intendant Pepin, in instalments of 40,000 to 50,000 livres at a time, the whole transaction occupying several days, as Bassompierre had insisted on being paid in livres instead of in pistoles, and the money had, of course, to be counted and weighed in his presence. Finally, the business was ended, and on March 8 he gave his receipt for the sum and the resignation of his post to his successor's agents.

"It was," says he, "the same month, day and hour, that, twenty-one years before, I had taken oath between the hands of the King for the same charge of Colonel-General of the Swiss."

A few days later the younger Bouthillier again came to see Bassompierre, and informed him that the Cardinal had spoken to the King of his liberation, that his Majesty had granted it, and that he was to leave the Bastille almost immediately.

"Nevertheless," says the marshal, "I pressed him strongly to name the precise day on which I should be released, which he declined to do, although he told me that I should be entirely free within a week."

Several weeks, however, passed without Bassompierre hearing any further news of his liberation; and it was not until the last day of April that the Governor of the Bastille received a letter from Père Joseph, requesting him to assure the marshal that he would receive his liberty on the return to Paris of the younger Bouthillier, who was to bring him the order for his release. (The Court, it should be mentioned, was then at Compiègne.) Bouthillier arrived on May 5, but, as the marshal heard nothing from him, he sent his niece, Madame de Beuvron,

to see him, when the Minister told her that he had actually had the order for her uncle's release in his hands, but that, owing to the intelligence that had arrived that *Monsieur* had gone to Brittany, possibly with the intention of embarking for England, it had been decided that the marshal could not be set at liberty so soon, and the order had been cancelled. A few days later it was ascertained that *Monsieur* had gone to Brittany merely to visit some friends of his, and that he was staying with the Duc de Retz at Machecoul, and had not the least intention of leaving the kingdom. However, this did not hasten Bassompierre's release, and it began to dawn upon the poor marshal that there never had been any immediate intention of giving him his freedom, and that the assurances which he had received were merely a bait to induce him to sell his post of Colonel-General of the Swiss for about half its value.

Towards the end of May, Du Bois, Bassompierre's *maître-d'hôtel*, who was also commissary of the French and Swiss Guards, happened to go on some business to Château-Thiery, where the Court then was. Louis XIII, recognising Du Bois, for he had seen him frequently when he had been the marshal's guest, told him to come to his lodging and inquired when he was returning to Paris. Du Bois replied that he intended to do so on the following day. "Stay over Sunday," said the King—it was a Friday—"and I will give you an order for the release of the Marshal de Bassompierre, which I will have made ready on Monday, after I have spoken to the Cardinal." Du Bois, greatly delighted, for he was much attached to Bassompierre, readily promised to remain, and lost no time in sending off a courier to bear the joyful tidings to the Bastille.

On the Monday, the elder Bouthillier went to visit the Cardinal, who was staying at Condé, and, before starting, told Du Bois that, on his return, he would give him the order of release, and that he could make arrangements to

leave for Paris the following morning. But when, on the Minister's return, Du Bois went to receive the despatch, Bouthillier informed him that his Eminence had been so much occupied with important affairs that day that Bouthillier had hardly been able to mention the matter to him. However, he was coming to Château-Thiery on Wednesday to see the King, when no doubt the order of release would be made out.

The Cardinal did not arrive until Friday, and when, after he had concluded his business with the King and returned to Condé, Du Bois went to Bouthillier, fully expecting to find the precious document awaiting him, he was told that so many pressing affairs had had to be discussed that there had been no time to deal with that of his master's liberty, but that the marshal might be assured that it would be decided on the earliest possible opportunity. And he suggested that, if Du Bois wished, he should go to Paris and return a few days later, when very probably the order of release would be ready for him.

"On the Saturday," writes Bassompierre, "*Monsieur le Comte* sent me word that he had learned on very good authority that my liberty was resolved upon, and that in twenty-four hours I should be released without fail. But on the Monday I saw Du Bois, who made me understand that it was pure deceit; and, although the First President sent to tell me the same day that I should go out before the end of the week, I did not in the least believe that I should be set at liberty."

However, assurances of his approaching liberty were not wanting. First, the younger Bouthillier told Madame de Beuvron that the delay in setting her uncle at liberty was due solely to the suspicious conduct of *Monsieur*, of whom apparently the marshal was regarded as so devoted an adherent that it would be imprudent to give him his freedom until the King could feel sure that his brother had no intention of causing further trouble. Then,

towards the end of June, Du Tremblay came to inform Bassompierre that he was charged by the Bouthilliers, *père et fils*, that he might never regard them again as honest men if he were still a prisoner in a fortnight's time. Finally, a week later the son wrote that the Cardinal had given him his word that the marshal was to be set at liberty, and had authorised him to tell him so.

And so the miserable game went on month after month, year after year, the Cardinal gratifying his malignity by wantonly sporting with the hopes of his hapless prisoner, who was continually receiving the most confident assurances that his freedom was at hand, only to discover that they were worthless. It is indeed astonishing that so great a man should have descended to such paltry exhibitions of spite, and have persuaded, not only his colleagues in the Ministry, but his sovereign as well, to lend themselves to them. But Richelieu was a strange character, and combined in a singular degree qualities worthy of the most profound admiration with others which can provoke nothing but contempt.

But the cruel disappointments inflicted upon him by the malice of the Cardinal were far from the only mortifications which Bassompierre had to endure. His financial affairs were not in a prosperous condition, and his sojourn in the Bastille brought him to the verge of ruin. His creditors, whose appetites appear only to have been whetted by the sops which the sale of his post of Colonel-General of the Swiss had enabled him to fling to them, grew more clamorous than ever ; his men of affairs proved unworthy of the trust he reposed in them and pilfered the *débris* of his fortune, and an Italian bank, by means of a forged document, seized upon a magnificent tapestry which he would not have parted with upon any consideration. Nor was this all. With the entry of France as a principal into the Thirty Years' War, Lorraine had become the battle-ground of the hostile armies, and Frenchmen, Imperialists, and Swedes vied with one

another in pillaging the châteaux and estates of the marshal and his family :

“ The last day of June [1635] *Monsieur le Prince* arrived in Paris, returning from his post of lieutenant-general of the King’s army in Lorraine. On his departure, he had left orders that my château of Bassompierre was to be demolished, and this was subsequently executed.”

The destruction of this château, which was situated near Briey, may, of course, have been an act of military necessity ; but it was more probably one of pure spite, since, as we know, there was little love lost between the marshal and Condé.

“ On the 12th January [1636], I received the sad news of the death of my niece, the nun of Remiremont ;¹ and, a few days later, I learned that the King’s commissaries had carried off all the corn from my house of Harouel, and this, not only without payment, but without even giving a certificate that they had taken it.

“ The month of February arrived, at the beginning of which I learned from Lorraine that a certain Sieur de Villarceaux² had a commission from the King to raze my house of Harouel to the ground. This I felt most cruelly, and I sent to entreat the Cardinal to avert this storm from me.”

Harouel was spared, though it is doubtful whether this was done out of any consideration for its unfortunate owner.

In the following May Bassompierre succeeded in obtaining an ordinance from the King for the restoration of his corn. But Gobelin, Intendant of Justice and Finance in Lorraine, who in the days of the marshal’s prosperity had been his intimate friend, protested against this ; and it was finally decided that he should be allowed to keep it for the use of the army, nor was Bassompierre able to obtain any pecuniary compensation.

¹ Nicole Henriette de Bassompierre

² Anne Mangot, Seigneur de Villarceaux. He was Intendant of Justice and Finance in the Three Bishoprics.

" And, afterwards, when it was mentioned to the Cardinal de Richelieu, he observed that it was very strange that I should ask money of the King for my corn, seeing that I was so rich that I was building a sumptuous house at Chaillot ; that I was having such splendid furniture made that the King had nothing like it, and that during the six years I had been in prison I still maintained such great state that it was impossible to equal it.¹

" A few days later, in the same month, the Duke of Weimar was authorised by the King to refresh his army in the county of Vaudemont and in my marquisate of Harouel, which was delivered over to pillage. This he executed so well, that every kind of plunder, cruelty, and atrocity was practised there, and my estate entirely destroyed, save the château, which could not be taken by this army, which had no artillery.

" At the end of the month of May the troops of the said Duke of Bernard of Weimar attacked our château of Removille, where five or six hundred peasants of both sexes and of every age had taken refuge. They carried it by assault on the 28th, and killed the men and the old women who were there, carried away the young women, after violating them, and, having pillaged the château, burned it with the children who were in it."

In July of the following year the Château of Harouel, which had been occupied by the troops of the Duke of Lorraine, was bombarded by the King's troops, and, after seventy cannon-shot had been fired at it, was surrendered to the French commander, who left a garrison of thirty soldiers there, to be maintained at Bassompierre's expense.

In August, 1636, Bassompierre's niece, Madame de Beuvron, went to the Cardinal to solicit her uncle's liberty.

" But he answered her, in mockery, that I had been

¹ Not long after this, the Cardinal asked Bassompierre for the loan of the house with the magnificence of which he had taunted him. It is needless to say that the request was granted, though the marshal was obliged to turn out the Duchesse de Nemours, to whom he had lent it.

only three years in the Bastille and that M. d'Angoulême had been there fourteen ; that the duke was returning very opportunely to give some good advice on the subject of my liberation. I omitted to mention that, at the alarm of the passage of the Somme,¹ MM. d'Angoulême, de la Rochefoucauld, M. de Valençay and other persons who had been exiled were recalled ; but anger and hatred continued against me in such fashion, that, not only had they neither consideration nor compassion for my long sufferings, but, on the contrary, wished to increase them by this derision and mockery."

It might be supposed that if, in these circumstances, Bassompierre had little to hope for, he had little to fear. Such, however, was not the case. Some notes written by him in the margin of a history of the reigns of Henri IV and Louis XIII, composed by the Historiographer Royal, Scipion Dupleix, the proofs of which are said to have been corrected by Richelieu himself, were published under his name, but entirely without his authority, by a monk named Père Renaud, the confessor of his fellow-prisoner the Abbé de Foix, to whom he had lent the copy containing them. The marshal's criticisms were probably pretty stringent, but those which appeared in print were a great deal more so, and the work aroused a considerable sensation. Dupleix complained to the Cardinal, and, says Bassompierre, " they did not fail to report the matter to the King and to tell him that it appeared evident from these memoirs that I entertained an aversion to his person and State."

About the same time, a soldier of the Light Cavalry named Valbois was arrested and brought to the Bastille, charged with having recited a sonnet against the Cardinal, beginning, '*Mettre Bassompierre en prison* ;' and the marshal was warned by his friends outside to destroy all his papers which might be capable of injuring him, as it was

¹ In the summer of 1636, an army of Spaniards and Netherlanders invaded Picardy, crossed the Somme, took Corbie and threatened Paris, in which for a time the greatest alarm prevailed.

intended to seize them, with a view to bringing him to trial.

"I confess," writes Bassompierre, "that this last warning, which followed so many unfortunate incidents, was almost sufficient to destroy my reason. It was the 9th of October [1637] that I received it. I passed six nights without closing an eye, and in an agony which was worse to me than death."

Finally, however, Valbois, after being interrogated several times, probably with the object of ascertaining whether Bassompierre had had anything to do with the composition of the objectionable sonnet, was set at liberty, and, as no action was taken against him, the marshal's mind became calmer. Nevertheless, he appears to have lived in constant apprehension lest his papers should be impounded; and this no doubt accounts for the fact that, in his *Mémoires*, the composition of which were now his chief occupation, he exercises a rigorous discretion in his comments on current events, although he was kept informed by his friends of everything that was happening in the world outside. "I shall say nothing," he writes naïvely, as though to shelter himself from all reproach, "of the quarrel between the King and the Queen . . . of the punishment of the nuns of the Val-de-Grâce . . . of the dismissal of the King's confessor, Père Caussin . . . nor, finally, of the entry of the Chancellor into the Val-de-Grâce, where he caused the Queen's cabinets and caskets to be broken open, in order to seize the papers which she had placed in them."

Bassompierre did not confine his literary activity to his *Mémoires*; he wrote also the history of his embassies to Spain, Switzerland, and England, which was first published in 1668. In 1802 an octavo volume, bearing the title of *Nouveaux Mémoires du Maréchal de Bassompierre, recueillis par le président Hénault et imprimés sur le manuscrit de cet académicien*, appeared; but the best

authorities on the period are agreed in regarding this work as apocryphal.

The years passed, and Bassompierre still remained in the Bastille. So far from uttering complaints, he sought rather, by his words and acts, to disarm the enmity of the all-powerful Minister. He protested vigorously whenever he learned that the malcontents or the enemies of Richelieu claimed him as one of their number ; he lent his house at Chaillot to the Cardinal every time that he asked for it ; and, what does him more honour, when in 1636 France was invaded, he offered to serve as a simple volunteer. All was useless. The most distinguished personages solicited his liberty ; the poets interested themselves in his fate and attested by their verses a courageous gratitude for the favours which the marshal had bestowed upon them in the days of his prosperity. Richelieu remained deaf to all appeals.

“A rumour ran,” writes Bassompierre in 1638, “that the King had said to the Cardinal that he had it on his conscience to keep me so long a prisoner, and that, as there was nothing to allege against me, he could not detain me any longer. To which the Cardinal replied that, since the time of my being imprisoned, so many things had passed through his mind, that he could not now recollect the causes which had led the King to imprison me or him to advise it ; but that he had them among his papers, and would look for them and show them to the King. I know not if this be true, but the rumour was current in Paris.”

It is little wonder that, if the question of his liberty, after more than eight years of detention, was treated in this fashion, the hapless victim of the vindictive Minister and the cold-hearted King was sometimes plunged into the depths of despair.

“I know not,” he writes, “whether those who conduct the King’s affairs hate me or wish to overwhelm me with affliction that they have detained me so long in

the Bastille, where I can do nothing but pray to God that He will put an end to my long sufferings by my liberty or my death. What can I write concerning my life, since I pass it always in the same manner, save that from time to time some fatal accident happens to me?—For good fortune deserted me from the time I was deprived of my freedom."

In this state of depression we can well understand the bitter grief which the death of a little dog, which was his constant companion, appears to have occasioned him:—

"There happened in the month of September [1639] an accident which is ridiculous merely to mention, and disgraceful for me to have taken to heart as I did, but which was much more insupportable to me than several others of more importance that have occurred to me in the course of my life. I had a little toy greyhound, called Médor, not more than six inches high, of a dun and white colour, the prettiest markings imaginable. He was the most beautiful, the liveliest, the most affectionate dog I have ever seen, a pup of my old bitch Diane, who had given birth to him about a year before her death, as though she had wished to leave me this consolation in my prison. It was certainly a very great one, for he afforded me much amusement and rendered my imprisonment more tolerable. I confess that I had conceived too great an affection for him. It happened that on Monday, the 12th of September, I ascended to the terrace of the Bastille with the Comtes de Cramail¹ and du Fargis, Madame de Gravelle,² and the Comte d'Estelan,³ who had come to visit me that day, when a great, ugly black greyhound belonging to M. du Coudray, whom I always feared so much for my dog that I generally carried him in my arms when I knew that the other was on the terrace, started to play with him, and, in doing so, placed

¹ The Comte de Cramail had been arrested and brought to the Bastille in 1638. He had been so ill-advised as to speak against the Cardinal in the presence of King.

² Marie Criton d'Estourmel, dame de Gravelle. *Tallemant des Réaux* asserts that she had, while in the Bastille, where she remained several years, an amourette with Bassompierre.

³ Son of Saint-Luc and the marshal's sister, Henriette de Bassompierre.

a paw on his little body in such fashion that he crushed his heart before my eyes. Assuredly, this accident crushed mine and distressed me to such a degree that I was sad for a very long while, and the memory of this poor beast torments my mind still."

Bassompierre's *Mémoires* conclude in October, 1640, with a reference to the death in exile of his brother-in-law Charles de Lorraine, Duc de Guise, the news of which had just reached him and appears to have caused him much distress.

CHAPTER XLII

Death of Richelieu—Bassompierre is offered his liberty on condition that he shall retire to his brother-in-law Saint-Luc's Château of Tillières—He at first refuses to leave the Bastille, unless he is permitted to return to Court—His friends persuade him to alter his decision—He is authorised to reappear at Court—His answer to the King's question concerning his age—He recovers his post as Colonel-General of the Swiss—His death—His funeral—His sons, Louis de Bassompierre and François de la Tour—His nephews.

AT length, on December 4, 1642, Richelieu succumbed to the one enemy whom he was unable to subjugate, in full possession of all the power and splendour for which he had laboured so unceasingly. Save to his family and his immediate followers, his death brought little regret, for all classes had felt his iron hand, and even the King seems to have experienced a sense of relief at the thought that the short span of life that remained to him would be free from that overshadowing presence.

It was not, however, without considerable difficulty that the distinguished prisoners of the Bastille succeeded in obtaining their freedom. Mazarin and Chavigny demanded that they should be set at liberty; but Sublet des Noyers opposed it. The order of release was only signed by the King on January 18, 1643, and, as the liberated captives were not authorised to return to Court, Bassompierre refused to leave his prison. His friends, however, persuaded him to do so, and he retired, in accordance with the King's orders, to the Château of Tillières, belonging to his brother-in-law, the Comte de Tillières.

Henri d'Arnauld, Abbé of Saint-Nicolas d'Angers, in a journal addressed to the wife of Président Barillon, describes the incidents of this deliverance, which the

invisible influence of Richelieu seemed still to be hindering :

"January 4, 1643. . . . Hope is held out to the two marshals who are in the Bastille that they will be liberated before the end of this month.

"January 7th. . . . The prisoners of the Bastille entertain great hopes of an approaching liberation.

"January 11th. . . . I do not see that the hopes which have been given to these gentlemen of the Bastille are based on too sure a foundation. I greatly wish that I am wrong in the opinion I have formed.

"January 18th. . . . Since the letter I wrote I went to the Bastille, to which M. de Romefort came, on behalf of M. de Chavigny, to inform MM. de Bassompierre, de Vitry and de Cramail that the King gave them back their liberty, but on condition that the first shall go to Tillières, M. de Vitry to Châteauvilain, and M. de Cramail to one of his houses. The two last received this news with joy; but M. de Bassompierre is up to the present very decided to refuse to go out on that condition, and all his friends and servants are quite unable to influence him in the matter. They ought to go out to-morrow. Perhaps, between now and then he will alter his decision.

"Wednesday, January 21, 1643.—On Monday, MM. de Bassompierre, de Vitry, and the Comte de Cramail left the Bastille, the last two with great joy. As for the first, his relatives and friends had all the difficulty imaginable to persuade him to accept his liberty on condition of going to Tillières, and a hundred times I believed that he would refuse to do so. I was at the Bastille from 10 o'clock in the morning until 9 o'clock in the evening on the day on which they went out. . . . They are to remain here for three or four days. They have visited all the Ministers. There is some hope that the Maréchal de Bassompierre will not remain long where he is going.

*"January 25. . . . The three persons who had come out of the Bastille were forbidden to visit *Monsieur*. They have taken their departure. The Marquis de Saint-Luc brought to the King a letter of thanks from the Maréchal de Bassompierre. The King, after reading it*

twice, observed : ' I refuse to allow people to make terms with me, and the Maréchal de Bassompierre is one of the first who told me that I ought not to do it. If he had not decided to go to Tillières, I should have left him in the Bastille, to be maintained there at his own expense. I gain by the release of these persons 45,000 livres a year.' ¹ ' Yes, Sire,' answered Saint-Luc, ' and 100,000 blessings.'

" Tuesday, January 28. . . . The Maréchal de Bassompierre has left Chaillot this morning and will reach Tillières to-morrow.

" March 11. . . . The Maréchal de Bassompierre is so bored at Tillières that he declares that he repents of having left the Bastille and followed in that the advice of his friends."

Some weeks later, and very shortly before his death, Louis XIII authorised the Maréchaux de Bassompierre and de Vitry and the Comte de Cramail to reappear at Court.

It is related that when Bassompierre went to pay his respects to the King, his Majesty received him very graciously and inquired how old he was. " Fifty, Sire," was the reply. " Surely you are much older than that ? " exclaimed the King, in surprise. " I deduct the twelve years passed in the Bastille, since they were not employed in the service of your Majesty." And on being presented to a beautiful young girl, he observed : " Mademoiselle, how much do I regret my youth when I see you ! "

Nevertheless, so greatly had the tone and manners of fashionable society changed since that fatal day when he had lost his liberty, that poor Bassompierre—Bassompierre who had formerly passed for the marvel of the old Court !—appears, with his habits of magnificence and gallantry, to have been regarded as a trifle antiquated though, in the opinion of Madame de Motteville, " the

¹ The Governor of the Bastille was allowed thirty-six livres a day for the maintenance of a marshal of France,

remains of the Maréchal de Bassompierre were worth more than the youth of some of the most polished of that time." The young men to whom Madame de Motteville refers formed the cabal of the "*Importants*," whose ephemeral reign was terminated by the imprisonment of the Duc de Beaufort (September, 1643). To this cabal belonged the Marquis de la Châtre, who, on the death of Coislin, who had died in 1641 from wounds received at the siege of Aire, had succeeded him as Colonel-General of the Swiss. He was obliged to surrender this post, of which the marshal resumed possession, on condition of paying Le Châtre the 400,000 livres which he had received from Coislin. Bassompierre's resignation was considered as null and void, and the post as not having been vacated.

Bassompierre did not long enjoy this return of favour. On October 12, 1646, his servants found him dead in his bed at Provins, where he had stopped for the night, while returning to Paris from a visit to the elder Bouthillier's country-house. He had evidently passed away peacefully in his sleep, "as he was found in his customary position, one hand under the pillow at the place where his head rested, and his knees a little raised."¹ His body was brought in a coach to Chaillot; the intestines, the tongue, and the brain were buried in the parish church before the high altar; the heart and the rest of the body were delivered by the curé to the Minims of Migeon, whose convent was close to the château, and deposited in a chapel to the left of the high altar, in the choir of their church. The Duc de Chevreuse and "other nobles and ladies of high quality, with a great number of bourgeois and inhabitants of Châlons (*sic*)," assisted at the funeral ceremony.

The Maréchal de Bassompierre left two sons; one by Marie d'Entragues, the other by the Princesse de Conti.

¹ Tallemant des Réaux, *Historiettes*, art. Bassompierre.

The first, who was called Louis de Bassompierre, took Holy Orders, and, after being provided, doubtless through his father's influence, with two rich abbeys, was consecrated Bishop of Oloron, a see which he subsequently exchanged for the more important one of Saintes. He was, in later years, appointed almoner to *Monsieur*, brother of Louis XIV ; but this post he resigned, in order that he might reside continuously in his diocese, in which respect he set an example which other bishops would have done well to follow.

The Bishop of Saintes was a pious and worthy man, beloved by the poor and esteemed by everyone. During the troubles of the Fronde he laboured to maintain in their allegiance to the Crown, or to bring back to their duty, the population of Saintes, Brouage and the surrounding country, and it was he who negotiated the accommodation of the Comte, afterwards the Maréchal, du Daugnon with the Court. He died in Paris, whither he had come on business connected with his diocese, on July 1, 1676. "*Hélas !*" writes Madame de Sévigné, "*à propos* of sleeping, poor M. de Saintes has fallen asleep this night in the Lord in an eternal sleep. He had been ill for twenty-five days, bled thirteen times, and yesterday morning he was without fever. He talked for an hour with the Abbé Têtu (these kind of improvements are nearly always deceptive), and on a sudden he fell back in agony, and, in short, we have lost him. As he was extremely lovable, he is extremely regretted."

"The worthy prelate," says the *Gazette de France*, "has left his friends sensibly afflicted, the poor of his diocese in the extremity of grief, and all those who knew him edified by the exemplary actions of his life, and his Christian resignation at death." By a will, made the year before his death, he left all his property to the poor and the churches of his diocese.

The marshal's son by the Princesse de Conti was known as François de la Tour. He is described by Goulas

as "one of the handsomest and bravest men of the Court"; and Tallemant des Réaux writes :

"He [Bassompierre] had a son by the Princesse de Conti, who was called La Tour-Bassompierre; it is believed that he would have recognised him, if he had had the leisure. This La Tour was brave and well made. In a duel in which he took part as second, having to fight with a man who for some years had had a disabled right arm, but had accustomed himself to make use of his left, he allowed his right arm to be bound and, nevertheless, beat his adversary."

François de la Tour appears to have resembled his father in other respects besides courage and good looks, as, in September, 1639, we find Bassompierre complaining that "a person who was very nearly related to him, named La Tour, had been gambling and had expended in a prodigal fashion a great deal of money, which had occasioned him much vexation."

François de la Tour was wounded on August 10, 1648, at the taking of Vietri, in the kingdom of Naples, and appears to have died of his wounds. "It is," observes the Marquis de Chantérac, "without doubt of him that the *Gazette de France* speaks in announcing, under date January 27, 1648, that the Sieur de Bassompierre, naval captain, had distinguished himself in the engagement which had taken place between the King's forces, commanded by the Duc de Richelieu, and those of Spain, under the orders of Don Juan of Austria, in the Gulf of Naples."

Of the three nephews of the marshal, the eldest, Anne-François, Marquis de Bassompierre, was killed in a duel in May, 1646, without having married. The second, Charles, Baron de Dommartin, married Henriette d'Haraucourt; but his male posterity continued only to the second generation. The third, Gaston-Jean-Baptiste, Marquis de Baudricourt and de Bassompierre, left descendants who were attached successively to the service

of Lorraine and of France. The last male representative of this branch was Charles-Jean-Stanislas-François, Marquis de Bassompierre, who died in 1837. The families which to-day bear the name of Bassompierre would not appear to be connected in any way with the House of Betstein.

THE END

Bassompierre, François, baron de 173903 HF.B
Author Williams, Hugh Noel B522

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